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## HOPE AND STRENGTH

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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# HOPE AND STRENGTH

ADDRESSES BY  
P. N. WAGGETT, M.A., OF THE  
SOCIETY OF SAINT JOHN THE  
EVANGELIST

*"God is our  
hope & strength,  
a very present  
help in trouble"*

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

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To  
K. B. W.



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## PREFACE

Naturalism. Dynamic. Pascal. Introductory Remarks: Faith and Power—The Transfiguration—A new day—Phases in individual life—An active phase for society—Matthew Arnold's plea for a disinterested spirit—Tasks overlap—Sacrifice unites vision and action—False activities—Spiritual healing and Christian Science—Sin—Our greatest need is the increase of prayer.

I TAKE the opportunity afforded by this publication to add in quiet some words upon the subject of the following Addresses. The spoken words and these written ones are intended to express two convictions—

First, life is meant for work. We are to lift some weights and build some roads, not only gain higher points of view.

Secondly, all work must come of prayer, and be at every stage in prayer. Only the wisdom that is from above can really change what is to what should be.

To avoid long footnotes, I also add three sections of explanation: two of the words "Naturalism" and "Dynamic"; the third of a reference to Pascal.

## I. NATURALISM.

The words "Naturalist" and "Naturalism," used on p. 13 below, in the controversial sense of Mr. Balfour and Professor Ward, cannot well stand without a word of defence. It is true that this controversial use is open to objection. In some minds it has been associated with a revolt against science, and against at least some of the regular processes of the reason. Anti-intellectualism is the name given to this revolt by Professor Inge in the valuable preface to his *Knowledge and Faith*. But I am sure that irrationalism, as I find I have called it in the following Addresses, is not by any means essentially connected with the controversial use of the name "Naturalist."

In that use "Naturalist" means not one who believes in Nature or in Natural Law, or one who resists the claim of an exceptional 'supernatural' to control particular departments of experience, or, again, one who resents and resists the popular antithesis separating Divine providence from necessary order. It means one whose view of Nature is one-sided, exclusive, narrow, as narrow as the popular antithetic view of Grace or God. It means one who regards events as less significant because they are more manifestly inevitable, less 'Divine' because they are more regular, less spiritual because they are more frequent. And



surely this view is no less objectionable than the false Spiritualism, the narrow piety, which makes exactly the same distinctions, the same comparisons, with an opposite prejudice and from an opposite point of view. The two parties have hold of the same dead stick by its two ends.

This Naturalism, just as much as this Spiritualism, believes itself to be, if not triumphant, at any rate exorbitant. If it does not crush its enemies, it believes itself at least to 'renounce' them, to declare against them a war *à outrance*. But in point of fact both sets of extremists are examples of the forcible-feeble. Setting out to be intolerant, each proves to be incapable. Proposing to claim all for Nature, the Naturalist in fact claims far too little for it. Posing as its prophet, he is in fact its detractor. And we object to him, not because he thinks too highly of Nature, but because he thinks of it ignobly, because he makes a dead idol of what is in fact alive.

This results from his thinking of it in isolation. All exclusiveness ends in the decay of the unit selected for exclusive preservation—always, at least, when it is an affair of life. And the exclusive claim for 'Nature' is based upon forgetfulness of what Nature is, how noble, how highly related, from what sources sprung, to what ends designed. It is perfectly true that the exclusive piety is open to an exactly parallel charge, subject to an exactly equal fate. Despising 'Nature,' exalting Spirit

in isolation ; despising knowledge, exalting faith ; it proves at last, and at no very long remove, to have defined Spirit as without substance and without act, to have reduced faith to the level of ignorance. We may see a day when it will be necessary to annex the word "Spiritualism " to indicate this deplorable false friend and real enemy of faith.

We cannot, it plainly appears, even after years of constant repetition, too often repeat our protest against the thought that seeks the foundations of faith in the gaps left by science, and the opportunities of freedom and divine action in the interstices of order.

Meanwhile, and with some such explanation as this, we may for the present use "Naturalism " to mean the exclusive or jealous belief in nature and in Natural Science, the worship of Nature which, intending to be extravagant, turns out to be penurious.

Professor Inge has told us that he "cannot listen without impatience to those who use 'naturalism ' as . . . the antithesis of theistic belief."<sup>1</sup> There is no writer, I venture to think, a sensible man will differ from more unwillingly. Therefore I add, by way of defence, that we must often use words as we find them.

"Individuality " once meant what we now mean by "Individualism."

<sup>1</sup> *Sin and Modern Thought* in *The Interpreter*, January, 1906.

"Individualism" might now mean a belief in the existence or the just rights of individuals. We take it to mean, we make it mean, a false because exclusive, and therefore self-destructive belief in the individual's claim.

"Socialist" might mean one who believes in the existence or in the present perfection of Society. It does mean, in the mouth of a Socialist, one who complains that Society hardly exists at all; and in the mouth of those who criticize Socialism, it means one who makes for Society an illegitimate claim and promises in a future Society the achievement of impossible tasks.

May not "Naturalist" mean the exclusive, and therefore futile preacher of 'Nature'? It is true that the syllables also stand for a student of organic forms, and for the followers of what is said to be a school of literature in France. But the context will show well enough what sense is in a writer's mind.

No one, reading of the "anthropology of St. Paul," expects to find a discussion of pre-totemistic marriage customs, or descriptions of early knives and rare skull measurements.

No one, I trust, reading "Naturalist" as a term of criticism in the following pages, will think it comes from a writer who dislikes natural objects, or distrusts natural science, or recoils from the conception of natural law, or submits for an instant to the bogey antithesis between the

spiritual and the knowable. And if, all these things being excluded, one asks, "What, then, is this 'Naturalism' which you would avoid?" the answer is ready in the mere name of Haeckel, a name which might have recorded only—as it still must record—a life successfully spent in the pursuit of biological knowledge; but which, in fact, must stand most conspicuously at present for a very considerable intellect nobly exercised and enriched, and then devoted, a costly and cruel sacrifice, to the exhibition of the paralysing effects of religious controversy.

## II. DYNAMIC.

The word 'dynamic,' used on p. 18 and elsewhere, also seems to need apology. If one wants a term contrasted with 'speculative,' why, it may be asked, will not 'practical' serve?

It might once; it will not now. It has come to convey too little and too much. In some connexions, it is true, the practical man means the man who acts, and not only thinks or talks; and it means the man who acts with effect because he measures the means for success. But often the words mean little more than the 'sensible' man, the man found reasonable by the speaker, the man who can silence or disregard tiresome persons who wish to alter things. The 'practical view'

is in this context the view that nothing need be, or at any rate *can* be, done.

If, using the figure of physical movements, one should speak of the consideration of spiritual or social powers as a *mechanical* view, the word would certainly suggest the disregard of what is vital and moral. 'Mechanical' is almost a bad word. 'Dynamic' does not yet share its bad sense, although, as the name of a science, 'Dynamics' in many ways stands in the place of 'Mechanics.'

'Dynamic' comes from *δύναμις*, the Greek for 'power.' It may, I think, be used, by way of analogy, to indicate a view of affairs that attends to the energy and forces concerned in them.

I might almost have used 'kinematics' in figurative contrast. For Kinematics is the geometry of motion considered without regard to cause and cost ; an abstract description of position, direction, velocity. It determines the place, speed, and acceleration, at a given moment, of all the parts of a system, without taking account of their action upon one another, or of their respective masses, or measuring the forces that move them. It uses only the units of space and time, and does not state what is moved or what moves it.

Dynamics, on the other hand, is a study of the motion (kinetics) or equilibrium (statics) of real bodies. Its object is to state both the action of the parts of a system upon one another and also the powers that produce the positions and the



movements. It takes account of mass and force.

Our contrast by analogy with kinematics would be the more complete because any kinematical investigation of a thing in nature involves in reality a problem of dynamics, though by the selective arrangement characteristic of science, the kinematical questions can be answered alone by abstraction of the facts of mass and force.

In the same way, a descriptive study of society might be made without regard to the cause and cost of the picture it presents. But it would involve in reality the facts of power and inertia left out of the description.

I think, then, that one may conveniently say, always by way of analogy, that we have a dynamical view of affairs when we regard not only the pattern they show or the order in which one pattern after another is formed and disappears, but also, and characteristically, the direction and value of the powers employed to make an existing arrangement, or required to produce a new one.

### III. PASCAL.

An expression in the last Address about the *Memorial* of Pascal requires a word of justification, or rather a word to make it just by acknowledgement of a surface inaccuracy.

I said that the self-reproach contained in the words *Dereliquerunt Me fontem aquae vivae* was the more remarkable and touching because expressed by one whose life was free from every "entanglement of riches, ambition, or praise" (p. 90).

I allow the words to stand as they were spoken, and in substance they are just. But the date given in the *Memorial*, November 23, 1654, shows, as every student of Pascal is aware, that the new conversion happened at the end of what may be called Pascal's worldly period. His sister Jacqueline, after the troubles about her *dot*—scrutinised, like every affair of Port Royal, by the microscopic attention of a succession of lovers and critics—was professed at Port Royal, too soon, as Pascal thought, and not with his good will, in 1653. After this Pascal,<sup>1</sup> "*redevvenu homme du monde*," returned to Paris, where, in the society of de Méré and the young Duke de Roannez—one day to follow him in devotion—his life was distinguished and even splendid. He had everything, writes Jacqueline, called in religion *la Soeur de Ste. Euphémie*, to Mme. Perier, the elder sister and biographer of Pascal, "*qui devoient contribuer à lui faire aimer le monde et auxquelles on avoit raison de la croire fort attaché.*"<sup>2</sup>

There were the materials, then, for entanglement, and the appearance of it ; but the mind of

<sup>1</sup> *Port Royal*, Ste. Beuve, ii. 495 ; 2nd edition Hachette, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> *Port Royal*, Ste. Beuve, tom. ii. p. 501.

Blaise Pascal was never won by the most brilliant attractions of intellect, wit, or fashion, to the condonation of worldly morals. There is no reality corresponding to Père Rapin's dream of a Pascal abandoned in youth to occult sciences and magic, and rescued by Saint Cyran from commerce with Satan. Nor was there in his life anything of the more ordinary frailties of youth. He knew something of the troubles of money, but praise he might have had without alloy. We know, however, from Sister St. Euphemia's letter, quoted above, and relating what Blaise had confided to her on a visit to Port Royal, that in the midst of all his great occupations and brilliant pleasures, he was "*de telle sorte sollicité à quitter tout cela, et par une aversion extrême qu'il avait des folies et des amusements du monde, et par le reproche continuel que lui faisoit sa conscience, qu'il se trouvoit détaché de toutes choses d'une telle manière qu'il n'avoit jamais été.*" At the same time, there was an absence of effective devotion to God. The condition, at once attracted and repelled by the powers alike of religion and ambition, is one of such subtlety that it is best followed in the words of the sister who was his kindred spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Something, then, of entanglement there was. It was a "*train de vie véritablement fastueux.*" The very accident at the Bridge of Neuilly, supposed to have been closely connected with the "second

<sup>1</sup> *Port Royal*, Ste. Beuve, tom. ii. pp. 499-503.



conversion," was an accident to his four-horse or, as Ste. Beuve says, possibly even more fashionable six-horse coach. And the penitence we are allowed to have a glimpse of followed a time when, in his own judgment, he had been at once detached from the world, and unfaithful to God.<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. INTRODUCTION.

In the first age of the Church, the real humility, the self-knowledge, of believers was combined with power, and issued in a profound conviction of its presence. God's strength was to be made perfect in their weakness. They faced entirely original tasks where success was antecedently incredible, in calm expectation of the incredible success. They undertook what was set before them with the weapons of truth given into their hands. They enterprised the conversion of a world in arms, and in arms for false religion. They advanced upon an entrenched temple, an autocracy at once military and sacred. They did what had never been done. They turned the world upside down,—a world on its guard against them.

They conquered by faith. Faith was their victory. And this conquering faith demanded an unlimited sacrifice. They 'wasted' their lives,

<sup>1</sup> See Ste. Beuve as above, and also Prof. Léon Brunschvigg's note in his small edition of the *Pensées* and *Opuscules*, p. 140. Hachette, *Classiques Françaises*.

they endured pain, they counted no cost ; only they went straight to the end commanded through the suffering required.

The ambitious brothers, in half-ignorance, had cried *δυνάμεθα*, "we are able ;" "we can drink of the cup."<sup>1</sup>

Their assertion was not rebuked ; only its meaning was revealed. Advancing experience did not refute the eager engagement. It only changed its temper and unfolded the conditions of its realisation.

The word and its fulfilment were part of the Christian life. They reappear beyond the first Apostolic circle, beyond the Saviour's grave. "We are able," said the sons of Zebedee ; and long after St. Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

In every age the simple-hearted have found in the depth of an abasement like his, in the pits of self-knowledge, the treasure that he found—the treasure of Divine strength for tasks before unheard of, tasks which in age after age Christian lowliness has achieved.

This temper, the temper of expectant courage and actual endeavour, is what we need. To see the evil of the world is not enough. To groan over it may be but an easy self-absolution eloquent of the insight of our sensitive hearts.

We have to change the evil. We *can* change

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xx. 22.

what we see we ought to change. We can change it if we are prepared to suffer, if we will welcome a day of the Lord bringing darkness as well as light; darkness to sense, to self, to pride, to earthly peace; light to the conscience of those who give up earthly goods for duty; light also of deliverance and relief to them that sit in darkness through the oppressive selfishness of others or the harsher tyranny of their own sins.

It is only by the way of the Cross that we can pass from the vision of Jesus in promise, to the fulfilled glory of Jesus in a redeemed society. "We see not yet all things put under God's feet; but we see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and worship."

The nature that beamed upon the mountain's top is the nature that writhed at its foot.<sup>1</sup> The nature of man shines in Jesus for the fulfilment of prophecy and Law. It is degraded in the demoniac for the defeat of benevolence and common wit. The nature of man is manifested in Jesus for sovereign converse with Moses and Elias. The same nature of man is exposed in the possessed for sardonic appeal to the helpless disciples. On the mountain it is luminous and owned from heaven; on the plain it is tormented, rejected, heartbreaking, and claimed by Satan.

The work of Christ is to convey the glory from humanity to humanity; to convey the glory

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xvii. 2, 15.

that appeared in Himself to His members now under the tyranny of Satan.

And the way of communication is prayer and fasting. It is the willing obedience of His own that know Him.

Thus is the vision translated into valour, and triumphant in service.

This is the Christian life ; so to hold the vision that valorous service may spring of it ; so to face the battle that Divine beauty may reign in it. One can only hold the vision in comfort by avoiding the world. One can only range the world in comfort by forgetting the vision. It is by the abandonment of comfort, by accepting the cross, that we keep both vision and service ; that we are made a channel for the communication of Divine glory to the healing of the nations.

If we had grace to face the suffering, we should have grace first to expect and then to see the victory.

Thus while life is for work, work can only come of prayer. The call to prayer is not a call to something that is not work. It is a call from hollow work to real work, from fading power to lasting power.

For prayer is the presence of God known and loved, absorbed and absorbing.

And the practical character of life is an indication of the eternal nature of the God we seek in prayer.

Of this divine fact Christians have security in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word whereof the evidence is in the experience of grace.

Grace has in pardon and healing its constantly renewed beginning. But it proceeds to power ; and, according to the Divine Will, it is developed in human thought and work, but not through these alone, into the victory of God's purpose for the world.

Prayer seeks this development and is an essential part of it.

Sometimes the call in prayer, in faith, is principally to reflexion. There is what seems a pause for work, no pause for life, but the preparation of strength for efforts not yet required.

For ourselves there are many indications of the approach of a time of movement. Our winter of repose has been but too ill spent, our feeding at the roots too slight. But still the sap now moves again. The spring is near for growth. And we welcome it.

## §

A better day is coming ; a day of vigour and achievement ; of vigour more nearly equal to our discernment, of achievement less disproportioned to our discussions ; a day of Divine vigour and of work according to the Divine purpose. The power will come by inrush from beyond our



systems and our consciousness. May it find us, when it comes, expectant and prepared to welcome it, not in the temper of the sceptic noble trampled in the gate of rescued Samaria.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps among outcasts and despised persons will be hidden the believing souls ready to find the supplies beyond the wall and bring plenty to the city.

To say that the good time will be energetic is not to say that discussion will then be useless and discernment cheap. But the primary characteristic of the new day, for good and evil alike, will be effectiveness. It will be dynamic primarily, not primarily dialectical.

## §

Something like this difference of emphasis is found in an individual life-history. There is a period of moral questionings and moral anguish, of the recognition of good and evil, and some resistance to temptation. This at the best. There is no question then of how much good is done ; the question is of avoiding evil. It is a period for choosing the path, not measuring leagues along it. It fixes allegiance but does not achieve victory. Indeed, the very question of the bulk and extent and value of the good, of what human life may accomplish in greatness and quality, at this time only rarely occupies the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings vii.

mind. It is the time of moral criticism, in the best case of moral decisions and of escape from some disfigurements of our nature. There is an absorption in the task of fighting or flying from evil. We must at all costs rise superior to surrenders that degrade our nature as such. In its happier moods, it is a time of moral drill, of rehearsal for better things, of learning the use of arms and horse and the order of evolutions, with something of the gaiety and honour of a pure warfare ; of learning soon enough the failures of exercise, the weight of the arms, the nervous courage of the horse. The special character of this time disappears, like all such distinctions, when viewed from a sufficiently high point of view. To a limited but fair judgement it stands out clearly in certain lives.

After this comes a period in which the moral conflict is absolutely quite as important as before ; but relatively it is less absorbing. It is a part now of earnest life, and not the whole. If it is not now all-important, it is because it now exists side by side with a new diligence, the diligence of the search for light. Now we face the trial of doubt, the pilgrimage for vision. The soul, its purgation all incomplete, is nevertheless in the illuminative way. The man, no longer content with parental or official authority, now searches the records of the past to learn the nature of inspiration ; to find, if he can, the art of receptivity.

He searches the movements of the soul, that he may find how the inward eye may be opened. The Bible has a new student, and this student desires to know himself, and hopes that the Bible, as Coleridge said, may "find" him. Our longing then is to foretell the light, and to know it when it appears. It follows that the second period, with all its moral stress, has for its *characteristic* experience the agony of prayer, the longing to know Him that is true.

So, in the wider experiences of a generation, there is first the eagerness of discipline, and next the appetite for knowledge. These both survive, but the second in a much more marked obscurity, during a *third* period—the period of loving endeavour.

In this time a man's desire is to gain as much strength as possible for the works he already knows to be good, and to make every power available as far as may be for the intelligent service of everybody. It is at once by far the hardest and, in some respects, the simplest part of life.

The three periods are in some cases clearly marked. Of course, each possesses, together with its own characteristic, a share of what belongs more specially to the other two. But the contrasts remain. There is a time of watching against faults ; a time of glooms and lights ; and then a time of simple diligence, where lines of



work are fixed, and it remains only to finish some before the night ; the time, for faith, when strength is made perfect in weakness.

## §

I believe something like the active period is coming to our society ; not a flagging in the moral conflict, or dulness in the search for light, but an opportunity, in God's mercy, for receiving strength, by sacrifice, for genuine service. The life, truly yielded, would receive power for some great accomplishment, something to answer, in the plane of moral reality, to those victories of Science that are symbolic of the true advance—something to carry further, where they already touch our true interests, the achievements of art and law and medicine.

## §

It is true that forty years ago Matthew Arnold declared the *end* of a practical period ; he welcomed or desired a period when criticism, the movement of the spirit, should become more disinterested, more speculative. He was not "inclined to regret, as a spiritual flagging, the lull" perceived by some ardent liberals. He was "disposed rather to regard it as a pause in which the turn to a new mode of spiritual progress" was being

accomplished.<sup>1</sup> But this was forty years ago. There has been much speculative and disinterested thought since then, if not much success in it. At any rate, it is time again for the judgement to become not more, but less disinterested; not more detached, but more fixed to a task, more determined to follow the perception that things are wrong, with an effort to make them right.

In Arnold's moment the practical man was the 'Philistine.' But the Philistine believed that things were right, or would come right if left to themselves. At that time, therefore, the intellect had to be detached if it was to perceive that things were wrong. In our time there is a detached, disinterested perception that things are wrong; and by critical thought we are thoroughly set free from what is called, I know not whether with exact justice, the Manchester Liberalism of Arnold's period. No new detachment is now needed to convict us of social sin. What is needed is that society, speculatively and in detachment convinced of the existence of mischief, should begin to work in a practical and yet not uncritical temper to translate its conviction into virtue, and to effect the changes which the most refined critics have in a 'disinterested' way long approved. And there is no danger that this practical temper will be Philistine; for it belongs to Philistinism to be self-contented. The Philistine's is not the

<sup>1</sup> *The Function of Criticism*, 1865.

practical temper when the road of practice is self-reform.

When Mr. Adderley—raised by the genius of Arnold from the levels of history to the dignity of romance—declared the superiority of our breed “to all the world ;” when Mr. Roebuck asked the Sheffield cutlers whether “the world over or in past history there was anything like” the happiness of our England, Arnold knew that we must only murmur, “Wragg is in custody.” He knew that criticism had no chance if it recommended the introduction “of a six-pound franchise.” Practical proposals had been overdone ; the search for truth had become too much the affair of an organised party, the great Liberal Party. It was pursued “with the excitement of a little resistance, to give the happy sense of difficulty overcome ; but in general plenty of bustle and very little thought.” Everything had been seen quite long enough “in inseparable connexion with practical life.” “We have pretty well exhausted,” was Arnold’s judgement, “the benefits of seeing things in this connexion. We have got all that can be got by so seeing them.” We were to turn from practice to the pursuit of fresh ideas, “to the serener life of the mind and spirit.” “This life, too,” he said, “may have its excesses and dangers ; but they are not for us at present.”<sup>1</sup>

Well, we have, as much as ever men had, need

<sup>1</sup> *The Function of Criticism.*

of the serene life of the mind and spirit. But, whether because of a successful pursuit of ideas or for some other reason, we have of late certainly had no ground to suppose "that we have pretty well exhausted the benefits" of the practical method ; that "we have got all that can be got" that way. Wragg is still mostly in custody, and getting very little good, poor girl, in detention ; and we now take her not to be a telling criticism of our "unrivalled happiness," an effective answer to optimist *opinion*, a footnote to English glory, to make us *think* less well of it. We take her to be some one who ought not to be in prison, and whom we ought to keep out of it.

We find ourselves, for all our scarcity of ideas, possessed of some that clamour for realisation, and driven to the confession that what we lack is power to do our duty, the energy to bring about what we know to be right. We are condemned unless we do all we can. And we are miserable when all we can proves so very far from enough.

We need force ; we need means. This need is felt and confessed in the necessarily rough and outlined procedure of politics. Between and beyond the old divisions we see the growth of two parties, both seeking, by common discipline of the nation's forces and organised employment of the nation's wealth, to get the power and means at present lacking for needed reforms. They are agreed on the necessity of improvements. They

are agreed on the deficiency of means within public control. One party, to make good this deficiency, proposes a reduction of private accumulations; the other, a toll upon the nation's market.

These hopes, these proposals, are symbolical. They should teach men of prayer to recognise the actual deficiency of spiritual means within our life, for acknowledged tasks; they should teach them to seek replenishment from the really infinite wealth.

## §

The hour for action, then, is sounding, but in it we shall covet ideas the more because those we have prove at last to be stings and goads to a lazy will and a love that was asleep. The task of thought is not made less heavy because a fresh task of will begins.

We have learnt in other quarters of experience that the arrival of a new task does not linger till the old is done. The tasks of manhood make their punctual claim on growing life even when youth has been undutiful and its work left unachieved. We have done well, or not so ill, or it may be very ill, the task of 'disinterested' thought announced by Arnold. However that may be, it is followed now by the task of earnest and perhaps rapid realisation; and we must bend



ourselves to this in the hope that practical success may reveal some thoroughness in that earlier disinterested criticism.

## §

We see afresh that only in one way can enlightenment become practical, and politics escape from Philistinism. It is the way of sacrifice, the way of the Cross, the way of self-reform, that is, the reform of the self, not by the power of the self, but by the power of God, sought in humility and sorrow, and accepted in faith. In this way is found both light and work. Here is the escape from the self-contented 'progress' of Arnold's Philistine; here the escape from the ineffective and detached illumination of the fastidious student. We offer ourselves for work, yet not as worthy. We mark ourselves for reform, yet not as useless. For there is a power beyond us and within—a power for pardon first, and then for holiness and labour. And our confession of sin is an invocation to bring this power to the help of our whole society. Our acknowledged weakness is a strong cry in the ears of the Almighty.

May we be open on our side to the heavenly light, the heavenly life, which can alone teach or do any good thing.

The enemies of this light and life are not absent or inactive. They take the forms not only

of inertness, selfishness, resistance ; not only of fastidious depreciation of the life of service. They have a more dangerous presence in the multitude of pretended activities, the movements that, beginning by the scorn of patience and prayer, end in the discredit of industry and enterprise.

We lack the real force for movement, the real means to build with. But there is hurry enough, stuff in plenty, to hide from ourselves our poverty of substance, our faintness for labour. The air is full of 'strenuous' cries ; the scene is crowded by phantoms of the true effectiveness.

There is the incessant accumulation of treasure and of arms, the unresting, unwelcome, 'inevitable' extension of the territories of Europe. The old nations, it would seem, are forced to call fresh lands after their own names, and the seas are burdened with fighting-ships to guard them.

There is the accelerating whirl of business wherein often there is not even any effective exchange of things or greater facility of transport ; only a trick of the game to set the balance of credit in a new man's books.

The principal mischief worked by mock activity is that it produces disgust for the true. False work drives serious men to an inactive criticism, and men of faith to an ineffective piety.

It is our duty to be prepared for and to prevent this worst result ; not to allow sham work to

discourage work itself, valour itself, and genuine enterprise ; not to suffer the spending of energies proved fruitless to discredit the application to real tasks of the spiritual energies of love that could accomplish them. For love is of God, and carries His creative power.

## §

The renewed pursuit, then, of social reform is a national exhibition of the practical spirit, an opportunity for practical faith. It is new, not only in its sense of urgency and definition of needs, but also in the recognition of the positive deficiency of available resources, in the new determination to secure the necessary power. We do not look for more discussion and the agreement which discussion aims at as an ideal. We look for assimilation, for the vital acquisition, from stores presumed to exist in the world, of energy to accomplish acknowledged tasks.

All this is a challenge to faith, to that belief in Christ which may be developed again, as it has more than once been developed in the past, from trembling trust, through certainty of vision, to a valour for the removal of mountains.

A second manifestation of the same spirit is given in the pursuit and offer of health by what are distinguished as spiritual remedies. To a mind fixed on politics and industry, this



health-movement in religion may seem a small thing. But its importance appears when we remember the place taken in the modern mind by the notion of health in general.

In a generation less bent than ours is on 'being well,' faith-healing might be an obscure department of religion. But for us reflexion upon health is not a mental incident ; it is a tyrannous preoccupation. It absorbs conversation, covers hoardings, multiplies methods of culture, and builds up great fortunes by a constant and ungrudged tax upon the nation. A few resist the prevailing superstition, or go, when they are really ill, to good doctors ; others obey instruction for the enlargement of muscles. For the most part we pay the owner of some famous recipe a fee for protection against the unseen armies of disease, and walk, in joyless hope of immunity, between the microbe and the millionaire.

We must not wonder, then, at the vogue of Christian Science. It touches the sensitive spot in our imagination. Its promises are addressed to eager desires. It offers the consolations of religion and the encouragement of fellowship to the heart of man where that heart is tenderest, most alive ; where it is concerned about aches and pains, the prospects of digestion, the hope of a long life, of the "making of old bones" as our rustics say, as if the principal achievement of the human spirit was the consolidation of its

shell, the postponement of a change towards fuller life in frame as well as mind.

The present success of Christian Science is much better and more graciously accounted for by this, its announced correspondence with a prevailing anxiety, than by the suggestion that people of fashion, tired of going to church, want to get religious change without becoming what they call Dissenters.

Christian Science both indicates and appeals to a new willingness to welcome the power of God in healing the body. It was in this region that our Lord first impressed the world. His disciples, indeed, answered rather to the authority of His call, for which they were prepared by ancient prophecies, by the witness of their own inspired leader, or by the recognition of the Saviour's knowledge of their hearts. But, to the surrounding world, Christ's first appeal was made in the curing of pain and weakness, in the restoration of the powers of sense and action. Our own intense desire for health may be a preparation for a new appeal like the first.

We may be on the threshold of a great disclosure of the secrets of health, of new methods for the strengthening of the composite being of man by forces flowing in all its channels, physical, mental, and spiritual.

It is often said that 'the Church,' by neglect and silence, or by untimely criticism, first hampers

and then, by reaction, causes a perversion of free spiritual movements ; that happy advance is made impossible by the paralysed dogmatism of the trustees of tradition, who, in the huddled guardianship of a treasure committed to them, remain ignorant of its most valuable contents. The same thing has been said in the present case as in the more important one of social reform. In spite of the natural attraction of this view, I am convinced that the new hopes or new knowledge of power for healing to flow through mind and spirit have been obscured, and are likely to be still further obscured and discredited, not by orthodox rigidity, nor even for long by the ludicrously eager acceptance of statements without proof, but by ignorance of large and certain features of Christian history and doctrine. It is precisely a little stiffening that the popular mind needs. It is precisely orthodox caution and orthodox knowledge that can help us. And the health-movement in religion may easily run like an unbanked stream into the sand of oblivion for lack of a little wholesome sternness of the critical spirit. In the Roman Church 'miracles' are always suspect, and sometimes persecuted. But it is *there* that somehow they abound. What is hampering our return to the ancient trust of the Church in Christ as Healer is precisely the combination of the search for health with confusions of metaphysical doctrine that are frankly inexcusable in

an educated people, and with a religious schism that is criminally unnecessary in the neighbourhood of the Church of England. It is lamentable that the cause of spiritual healing should be made ludicrous by parodies of Berkeley. It is wicked to make of it a cause of division among believers.

If a man has found, in connexion with the fear of death or pain, a conviction of the power and love of God never evoked in him by struggle with the more important evils of sin, never bestowed on him in the more certain channels of inward experience, surely his duty is to hasten back with his new treasure of conversion to the parish church or the parade service, where he vows it is so sadly absent. The newly enlightened should hurry to old friends in darkness, and contribute his gift of sight to their dark obedience round the altar of Christ. On the other hand, if a converted man, long upheld by the consciousness of the nearness and love of God, finds of a sudden a way in which that love becomes operative for the relief of temporal woes, finds proofs that even the world can receive, surely his duty is to rejoin his old believing comrades who have not shared the victory over sense and pain. The one entirely inadmissible course for a brave or generous spirit is to carry off the new treasure to where a coterie of other victors display to each other their affluence of

spirit in seclusion from a dark and feeble Church. No gallant heart could take this course.

## §

But there is a more serious defect in some of the new movements than their prophesyings about matter and spirit, and even their contempt of actual Christian societies. The natural elation of novelty may account for both of these. The denial of the practical reality of sin has a deeper root and will result in more serious mischief. It is a denial contradicted, not by prejudices of tradition or the verdict of fallible sense, but by the deepest and least disputable of our actual intuitions, the most unchanging elements of our experience. It is true that below this actual intuition hope divines a perfect state beyond experience. It is true that the heart's inmost voice declares the sovereignty of good and the final impossibility of evil. But our actual insight acknowledges as most certain a defect from this sovereign good, and hope is hope because experience is of a state to be reversed through moral struggle. The very charter of our essential and final dignity is our own condemnation of what we have at present achieved, and the sense of sin can only be lost by abdication of our native right to virtue. There is *practical* reality, therefore, in the sin which all divines teach to be



defect from the sole reality of God's glory. And of this practical reality much more is certainly known to us than of the frame of the world or the behaviour of physical life.

The moral conflict lies at the roots of present life. The changes of age and circumstance do not alter it, nor do all the transformations, antecedently inconceivable, that are wrought in evolution suffice to rob sin of its character. It wears one face in the dull greed of stupidity, and another in the polish of urbane treachery ; it grows from the rudiment of selfish bloodshed in the savage to the fine flower of detraction in the still selfish citizen. It is hard, indeed, to understand how anything so vile as one's own spite can have sprung from a root so nearly wholesome as tribal hatred. But the root, though nearly wholesome, had its poison, and the ancients sinned as well as we. And if it is impossible to conclude sin a new thing, still more plainly is it impossible to suppose it an old thing passed away. There is no shadow of a sign that the advanced accomplishment of life tends to the elimination of its evil, or that we merely count acts evil because we have begun to outgrow them.

Sin is indeed selfishness. But when we are asked, as by Canon Holland, why selfishness is sin ; why it is wrong to be selfish, and not only unsocial ; why, in fact, we *ought* to be social ;—we can only answer in some form of the statement

that He who gave us being demands our love, and commands us to love one another. Our failure is a failure to rise to a sovereign, undeniable demand which is at the same time the sovereign welcome, the offer of what our being is made to receive. And the failure is moral. We fail freely, or by the willing forfeiture of freedom.

The new optimism, though it is not thorough, has much good in it. It proclaims the immediate and perceptible effectiveness of Divine power ; it declares that death and sin are not invincible ; it holds up the hope of life and power in man, of a transformation to glory of *this* creature that we know, and not another.

But this optimism cannot be sustained in divorce from fact, however 'relative' the fact. To lose touch with fact is to banish one's self from victory. It is good to proclaim the sacred character of joy, to preach joy as a virtue. But joy can only be securely exalted when we recognise the existence and the justification of sorrow, and work for its defeat by obedience to the Divine will.

No movement or sect that shrinks from the acknowledgement of sin can really contribute strength to modern life. In whatever high spirits it offers guidance to a bewildered world or correction to a humbled Church, it is condemned to sterility, and can make no serious contribution to the new day. It will enlist the levity of

self-ignorance, or the half-despairing adventure of those serious souls who, oppressed by the melancholy of self-knowledge, are yet unwilling to face the medicine of the Cross. The sorrow of the world that worketh death may seem to find in the words, "There is no sin," a palliative for a time, and the song of false hope may for a time be kept up by the joy of the world that passeth away. The future is for open-eyed recognition of an evil to be destroyed, the sorrow that is turned into joy.

## §

The cure for us all is seriousness and serious hope. And if there is disorder and some waste of good aspirations in the present situation, they will be remedied, not by a more flexible versatility in Church rulers, nor by a relaxation of the vigilance of critics, but simply by an increase of the spirit of prayer in the general body of believers.

P. N. W.

Great College Street, Westminster,  
*August, 1907.*



## FIRST ADDRESS

### FROM SPECULATION TO EFFORT<sup>1</sup>

IN such conferences as these, we seek the help—for listeners give powerful help—of those who take pains to know what they mean when they call themselves Christians. Purpose of  
the course.

And our object, this time, is to lay stress upon the power that Christians ought to experience.

The Christian state is Light and Life, Truth and Power. Or, to speak more at large, it is the state of receiving truth and of being subject to power. Truth and  
Power.

The truth that the Christian receives is a truth he is learning how to tell. The power to which the Christian is subject is a power he is being trained to exercise.

What is true in some degree or other of each believing person, is true in a much higher degree

<sup>1</sup> This and the following addresses, preached in London at St. Mary's Church, Graham Street, in June and July, 1906, were reported in the *Guardian* and the *Church Times*. I am greatly indebted to the proprietors of those journals for permission to make use of their reports in this book.

of the believing community ; and it is perfectly true of that community in its ideal perfection, the Church seen and unseen, the Church which is the Body of Christ.

In the Church, as in the believer, there is light and there is life, truth and power : truth known and truth declared ; power felt and power used.

The contrast between power and truth is, it need hardly be said, not fundamental. The life is the light. The power becomes effective by being known. The truth is known by becoming effective. Faith, the correlative of truth, is always vigorous. Superstition or fancy, the *simulacrum* of faith, may begin and finish its career on a plane apart from the plane where forces move. It is like one of the air-plants of African deserts. It has its beginning, and completes its growth to death, without dipping roots into the soil of actuality. But faith, the reception of truth, is bound up in one reality with vigorous action.

The contrast, then, between the Christian state as the reception of truth, and the Christian state as the exhibition of power, is not organic or fundamental. But still, on its proper level, it is real and important. And those who make use of it are obliged to say that its two terms have not been equally attended to. The conception of Christian life as a state of power has been neglected, while Christianity as

a state of opinion has been made prominent and constantly studied.

Our object, I repeat, on this and the next few Sundays, is to emphasize the side of life and power. We guard ourselves by a deliberate assertion of the unity of power and truth ; and we proceed to concentrate our attention upon the first of these ; upon the effective or energetic character of the Church's being ; upon the kingdom of God primarily as it is in power and not primarily as it is in word.

At some other time I hope we may develop the statement that the forces of God are not by His appointment dark or dumb forces ; that they operate as light, and expel evil by glory, that is, by the manifestation to spiritual knowledge of the Divine holiness and beauty. But to-day our aim is very simple. It is to state again that religion is an energy and not merely an opinion, and that, if it is to be tested, it must be tested by experience.

Here I must interject a word of explanation or disclaimer. The announcement of our conference contained the words "with some reference to Christian Science." If I am not to engage your help on false pretences, it becomes my duty to say at once that I shall not exercise myself or you in special criticism of a system which is called by that name. I wish to discuss as best I can certain parts of the truth about

Religion an energy.

A disclaimer.

Christianity ; and I hope that in the course of this work I may appeal to some of the energies which have been attracted to that system and have moreover been manifested in whatever is good in it. The course, therefore, is not without reference to Christian Science. But certain things have happened which had not happened when our provisional notice was written ; and these to my mind make the present moment quite unsuitable for any comment that might become unfriendly or unwelcome to a section of our neighbours. Several points will meet us which, if one could treat them well, would be of practical help to those whose attachment to ordinary Christian worship is in danger. Here, of necessity, there is "some reference" to other ways of prayer. But I cannot offer any scientific, medical, or philosophic criticism of any particular system.

We may well expect some new emphasis in religion. For there has been a very real change of the general habit of thought in Europe and in England, both among believers and among unbelievers ; a change that results in the defence of our faith being very different, in method, and in choice of emphasis, from what it was twenty years ago. No doubt the roots of this change were planted long before. Still it began to be plainly developed quite within recent years. What is the change ? It is, that we have passed from a

A change in  
our habit of  
thought.

clash of opinions about facts that were held to be constant by both sides in debate to an effort to alter the facts about which the opinions were to be formed. The change is one of emphasis, rather than of range. Now, as before, there is much interest in speculation. Then, as now, there was much effort of reform. But the emphasis is changed. May we say, very roughly, that we have passed from geometry to dynamics? Our attention is fixed on power. We have given up problems and taken up programmes. We are no longer principally concerned in trying to make out what things mean. We are principally concerned in making things what we want them to be. And we chiefly differ in respect of the direction in which we desire change. This is clear enough when we look at the bad side of the change. But it is also true in general; and if it is sometimes hard to believe, that may be because, secluded from both the earlier and the later kinds of controversy, we live in one of those tranquil bays of the river of life where the forget-me-nots grow; in a region where the old fashions prevail; where <sup>Regions free from controversy.</sup> kindly souls, quite agreed upon what things are, and what they ought to be, discuss only the best way of co-operating towards an end acknowledged as good on all hands within the world they know. I have called these regions tranquil, but they are full of the movement



of useful energy for reform. For it is in these quarters, controversially stormless, that one half—only one half—of practical beneficence is found. Here is one party of the men who strive against a destitution which is society's crime; here are those who relieve poverty without criticizing the current explanations of its origin; here, besides, are those who minister to misfortune, to destitution, to disease without challenging the social system which makes disease resourceless and destitution normal for a class; certainly without attending to the question whether weakness had not better be cured by elimination of the weak. Here, most happily, are those who spend their lives to bring back other priceless lives to purity and honour, just because, thank God, it is, to them, no open question whether or not life is meant for purity and for honour.

In the regions of intellectual calm, the work goes on; but it is not in these regions that the formative lines are ascertained for the work of the future. And for the sake of the practical work itself, it is necessary that the questions should be faced which ask in what directions work is really possible, and what ends are really to be desired, faced in the zones of controversial storm. In much, then, of our Christian work we are still in those peaceful bays. We still behave, for example, as if the world was at one about the great outline of Christian morality. But, in fact, that is the very

last thing upon which the world is agreed. We form societies under names that, for the world, are question-begging names. And you will find that they are so regarded when you pass beyond the happy circles of those who are supporting these societies, and who think that all that has to be done is to recruit members for them. When you emerge from the sacred circle you will find that to speak of your objects is to strike sparks of hostility where you least expect them. You touch explosives ; you tread upon volcanoes. You discover that under the fair seeming of our civilization there are many wills—powerful wills, vigorous, clear, and ably trained—that are very far indeed from agreeing with or from promoting our programme of social improvement. It is to be feared that among ourselves we fall into a false security, and speak of great ideas of duty as if they were truisms upon which all men are agreed, while, in fact, they are challenged in many quarters, and if not challenged very explicitly in our England—where proposals are seldom explicit until the good work or the mischief has been done—yet challenged in clear, scientific terms in the great schools of naturalistic thought and in the great parties of social revolution on the Continent. In this country, movements, in their present aims praiseworthy, or at least innocent, are called by names bearing in Europe a vastly different meaning,

Christian  
morality  
challenged.

and pointing to changes which Englishmen detest. It would be an advantage if we did not use with a moderate meaning names that abroad have an extreme sense. But this advantage may be one denied to us by some hitherto unsuspected poverty of the English language ; and, in fact, it is impossible, in a world where "Christian Socialist" sometimes means anti-Semite, either to find new words for new objects, or to keep old words for their early purposes.

There is a change, then, which is no less real because we do not all feel it ; for if we do not feel it, this may be because the sectional character of English life throws us with those who are least affected by new movements. We are passing from a temper of criticism to a temper of proposals, or rather, from the criticism of accounts once accepted to the criticism of proposals once unanimous. Instead of speculation we have politics. This is true in good things. Take, for example, the present education movement. What has happened here ? The reason why most men are agreed that some change must be made in our education of the mass of the people is not simply that there has been a change of opinion about old facts. It is that there has been a change of experience. We have felt a new stress. Of course, the stress of experience works out its effect by way of altering men's opinions. But their

From criticism to proposals.



opinion, if I may say so, is no longer an opinion about opinions ; it is an opinion about forces ; and in fact the forces are driving men far in advance of their own conscious reflection. Our old debates about this matter were debates in a world that was in fact relatively stable. We knew what England was ; we looked forward to its being much the same for a considerable time. What was in issue was not what was going to happen, but how a certain condition of things which we all recognized as actual ought to be dealt with. We asked whether our children should be taught more than reading, writing, and arithmetic ; whether some glimpse of the treasures of learning should be added ; whether there should be training in handicrafts ; whether there should be training in devotion. What has happened since those days lying well within the memory of men still young ? The position of England is not only changed ; it has entered a state of progressive and accelerating change. It changes every week ; and in every group of weeks, every year, it changes faster than in the last. The call upon English force through the perpetual extension of the Empire is a new call day by day. When men who are not yet quite middle-aged were at school, Rhodesia was a place without a name, a wilderness explored by one or two specially adventurous hunters of big game. The day before yesterday it was inaccessible by rail. Men who are still doing

the work there reached it by a three months' journey. I saw the other day in a man's shed outside Bulawayo the waggon in which he had come to his post by such a pilgrimage. Now that journey occupies three days. A year ago the Zambesi was the great divider. Now the trains flung across it are carrying South African enterprise into the central region, where it will meet the growing civilization of the Lakes. Minds and tempers cannot keep step with the actual swiftness of history in our time. I must not pause to speak of the development of the Far East, of the development of popular energies in Europe, of the new forces there rising into effect, of the end of a long static period in Republican France, and of the changed condition of our trade.

In a world so current, so rapid in development, consistency of aim is only to be preserved by diversity of action, and not at all by repetition of statements. Our endeavour to change the training of our people comes from the practical stress of these movements. It does not arise from our having changed our minds, in the common sense of those words. We are confronted with forces that are, in a practical sense, quite new. No forces, I dare say, in an absolute sense, are new. I dare say that in respect of the moral world, as of the physical world, there is truth in the doctrine of the conservation of energy, the doctrine that the

New forces  
and new  
pro-  
grammes.

total of force is always the same. That may be true, but, remember, it may not be true, of the finite world of human mental energy. In either case there has, practically, been as much change for us in England as if the Channel had been dried up, and far more. There has been more change than if the moon, peopled and civilized, had been planted in the Atlantic. We are under the pressure of practically new forces, and we have to make actually new programmes. We may no longer spend ourselves principally in questions of how society came to be, or how we ought to regard it. We are called upon to 'laager' our civilization; to defend it from within against an earnest assault. We have to strengthen our children to meet the new strain. And those who, in presence of these new or practically new forces, think that all that is wanted is the refurbishing of old arguments, may polish their arguments until they shine in the most critical parade, but they will inevitably be swept away in the movement of a new world. In many respects, then, for our advantage, there has been a change from an academic temper to a temper much more like that of a man who works to stop a disastrous deluge from a broken dam.

But to say this is to say that there has been the same change on the other side. The bad movements, the movements against the Church, that is, against Christian fellowship in truth and

virtue, the movements against what is real in civilization, against common aims and justice and peace, the movements against hostile to morals and piety, are also changing Christian fellowship. in this dynamic direction; they direct endeavour not to the explanation of accepted facts, but to the abolition of unwelcome facts. Here, again, the change is masked by the circumstance that, through inequality of opportunity, men who belong to different periods of thought live in the same town at the same moment. This is not a question in which those whom I now address are behindhand. You are aware that there is no longer great vigour or force in the debate, for example, about the early chapters of Genesis. But, though that is the case here in church, where the clergy seek to outstrip one another in welcoming everything that by any stretch of language can be called modern and scientific, it is not so in the new classes of students created in the last twenty years or so. They are still reading the old books, and therefore the change is for them still masked. But the mask will fall off presently, and they will find that what unbelieving thought is vitally interested in is no longer any question of the explanation of the past. It is interested in movements for changing the present and the future. It also has abandoned problems and has taken up programmes.

The older condition is easily illustrated by the

great debate in which Huxley is the leading figure. He spoke for greater men than himself, but in controversy he was supreme, using the highest gifts of teaching and a perfect English style in a service to which he devoted the enthusiasm of a fine character. What was the position of morals in that debate? The great foundations of Christian morals were accepted by men of all parties as a datum about which we were to argue. And what the Church had to say to her critics then was, "See our moral system, and account for it if you can." The question was whether an account, based upon natural history alone, would be sufficient to explain the existence of the moral code, and of the structure of the Christian world. It was not a question whether that structure was good. All men knew that it was imperfect, but all men alike took it for granted that if only we lived up to the law we accepted, that law would be the greatest good the world might ever see. And what the believer said was, "This is my law. How do you think I came by it? Will natural selection account for its development?" "Account for it?" says naturalism<sup>1</sup> now. "We do not wish to account for it. We mean to abolish it."

The older  
condition  
illustrated.

Christian morality was once a crux, which materialistic thought could not solve. It is now

<sup>1</sup> "Naturalism" and "Naturalist." See Preface, p. x.



an obstruction which the materialistic movement proposes to sweep away. That is a plain difference, is it not? And what has been said represents the facts in that larger and clearer world of Europe, whose products we edit here at home into mild and moderate forms, lowering their colours and blunting their edges by the methods of compromise generally welcome to our national character. But we are not thereby saved from their results. For if they come in their moderate shape they will presently bear the strange fruit appropriate, not to the clipped foliage, as of yew-peacocks in a formal garden, but to the root that is hidden in the soil. For it is the character of the root and not the shape of the boughs that determines the nature of the crop.

Naturalism was once a movement of thought endeavouring to provide a rival explanation of Christian facts; it is now a movement of force endeavouring to create a different system altogether. It proposes to us not a new history, but a new ideal. The stress of its criticism of the Bible falls not upon the story of Creation, but upon the Ten Commandments. What is at stake is no longer our traditional explanation, or our traditional pedigree, of the Christian life. What is at stake is the survival of the very life we tried to explain. There is a great change in the direction

Christian  
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Naturalism  
and  
Christianity.

of push, of force, and away from the direction of mere consideration. No doubt such an expression as this is meaningless by itself. These forces must work by thought. But there is a difference between thought that finds its enemy in rival thought as such, and is content with academic victories, or only desires to change men's conceptions, and a thought which, through thought, endeavours to change men's conduct.

Our old critics were eager to declare, and they declared with perfect honesty, that they, as much as we, admired and valued the Christian life. They only attacked as useless the supernatural account of its origin. But this is not the case now. What was once the fulcrum over which swung the balance of debate has now become the thing to be crushed. It may happen in a lever, in which there are three points, called the point of power, the fulcrum, and the point of work, that two of these points change places in the course of the pressure because of the character of the material; then what was the fulcrum, the fixed thing upon which the lever moved, becomes the point of work where movement is caused. A pair of nut-crackers is a lever in which the fulcrum is at one end, and the power at the other, while the work is in the middle, where the nut is to be cracked. You expect the hinges to stand firm. The hinges, therefore, make the fulcrum. But if

Christian  
life newly  
criticized.

your nut is very hard it may defeat the arrangement. If the nut-crackers are not very strong, the nut will stand firm and the hinges will open. What was meant to be the point of work has turned out to be the fulcrum, and what was meant to be the fulcrum has become the subject of work. It has been torn in halves by a lever which, by reason of the nature of the materials present, changed what is called its "order" in the middle of the operation.

Well, that is what has happened in this naturalistic debate. The thing that used to be the fulcrum was the Christian fabric, the general lines of Christian and of moral and of civilized life. This system was taken for granted. Across that the discussion must swing. We could challenge people to account for it; and if their way of accounting for it did not seem reasonable enough, they must take ours if we could prove it. But now—like the hinges of the nut-crackers where the nut is too hard—the old fixed point is the point in danger. The new critics will no longer accept our Christian mode of life, with its ideal of pity, of mercy. I am not speaking of a narrow and particular range of morals, but of a great part of the broad basis of all morals in pity, mercy, love, self-sacrifice. It is precisely this that is challenged. Have you not heard the new commandment? "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye have no



pity." The teaching of the great and brilliant writer Nietzsche; whose influence (though he died some years ago) still grows, we are told, in Germany, is summed up in one word, as a challenge to pity, as the Gospel of deliverance from the bondage of mercy. It would be a good thing to analyze his conviction, and to show it to be groundless. But my point to-day is simply that this is, in fact, the character of his conviction, whether that conviction is sound or baseless; that his object of attack in the criticism of the Faith is nothing less than the traditional basis of Christian conduct. Pity, mercy, love, self-sacrifice, care for others, were parts of an ideal accepted by all men as good. This, we Christians said, could never have grown out of the stony soil of selfishness or tribal exclusiveness, could not be accounted for even by the beautiful and prophetic maternal instinct of sacrifice for the child—must have deeper roots and a broader base. This is the thing in which at present men of many kinds think they recognize the enemy of progress. And in the name of natural selection, the process of improvement by unchecked competition, they call upon us to cease to succour the weak, to cease to spare, to cease to lay down our lives for one another, to withhold ourselves from alms, from pity, from healing, from medicine, from all that weak sentiment (these are such words as they use) of charity and democracy, that love of the many, that care for

the disinherited which is our chief prize, and God grant that it may always be so. This Christian democracy, this recognition of the equal solemnity of lots unequally endowed, this determination to guard and preserve the wonder of human life wherever and in whatever shape human life is ours to guard, this it is we hear denounced as the enemy of progress. It is not our business to-day to consider whether such a presentation of facts will hold good or not, whether we could not, even on its own ground, show some reasons for distrusting it. All I am concerned for to-day is to draw your attention to the fact of the change in what I have called the emphasis of controversy. It was a controversy simply about the supposed way in which things came to be what they are. It is now instead a controversy about the right way to make them what as yet they are not ; and even a controversy about the ideal to be aimed at.

We have passed, then, to use rough-and-ready language, into a dynamic chapter, a political chapter, of the Church's life ; and surely we may add that this change is to our advantage. I do not think myself that the Church and the Christian faith make at all a bad figure in the realm of speculation ; but whatever else the Church is not, certainly the Church is a power. She may be a stammerer ; but she can stand fast. She may not be acute in the schools to meet the philosopher ; but she can

The change  
as it affects  
the Church.

be staunch in fidelity, while she rests in her Lord, to confront temptation and attack. The Christian body may not be in all eyes conspicuously great in philosophy, although, to a sane judgment, it is great there also, and can still escape or disentangle, as did St. Paul, the first great Christian philosopher, the powerful webs of hostile argument. But even if there are climates of thought where the Church does not flourish as a thinker, everywhere the Christian life may be a power ; and if we cannot make our position clear to other people, we can stand fast in it ourselves. Now in a chapter of power, steadfastness is of chief importance. For when the day comes for mere thrust and strife, the victory is not to the most acute tongue, but to the stoutest heart ; and if we have not stout hearts to stand by our Lord in the day of trouble and stress, then our Christianity has indeed been in vain. A man may say, "I have not the wits to meet this skilful question ; I cannot make out for myself exactly what the Bible is ; but I know what love and pity are, and I mean to stand by them ; and if for a hundred years men cannot explain why I should ; if to my dying day the opposite school of thought seems everywhere victorious, and I can find no explanation of this my root conviction of duty,—all this will have no tendency to make me give up that conviction. No, I will hold it the faster that it may still be there to be explained when the day of

acuter explanation dawns." Meanwhile, without perfect explanation, we understand. I must quote from a delightful and wise writer,<sup>1</sup> the profound saying of a little girl to her mother. "Mother, I think I should understand if only you did not explain."

We also can understand if we pause from explaining, can understand in spite of triumphant explanations that there is nothing to be understood. For the recognition of love and holiness is more intellectual than any debate ; and the grasp upon God maintained by the effort of conformity is more purely, more immediately, rational than any spoken philosophy.

And so, in conclusion, in face of this change in the stress and character of the enmity against the faith, we have to make sure that our activity undergoes a corresponding change. We must no longer be content with the search for arguments ; we must adventure also for fresh stores of that substantial reality, the Christian life, the power of Godliness ; so that there may be daily more to be explained, daily more that cannot be explained away ; so that this life may become so substantial a fact that all the subtilties of speculation may be found inadequate to account for it, and all the fury of enmity may dash harmless against it, as the sea breaks against a rock. We

The  
strengthen-  
ing and the  
foundation  
of the  
Christian  
life.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. G. K. Chesterton.

have been too long content to look for fresh modes of accounting for our Christian life, while we forgot the need of replenishing its substance. There is no way of reaching a positive conclusion in the examination of faith if our life contains only the *data* for denial. The real reason so many men, looking into themselves, into the Bible, and into life, find a conclusion hostile to the claims of God, is that they do not carry within them any grounds for a positive conclusion. They have no reason to think that God lives, for He has no witness in themselves. The only way by which we can reach a positive conclusion is the preservation, the nourishment, the perpetual enlargement, development, and strengthening of those substantial grounds in fact, which require, to account for them, the existence of the infinite holiness of God, and must receive for their support, as we said earlier in the more sacred moments of this morning,<sup>1</sup> the perpetual supplies of God Himself, given to us in the Holy Ghost, Who is One with the Father and the Son, and Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and is imparted to us by the infinite bounty of God, to become the substance of our being, the ground of our virtue, and the warrant of our convictions.

I could not wisely ask you for more time to-day. I had, indeed, proposed to myself to leave

<sup>1</sup> The addresses given in this book were preceded each Sunday by a shorter sermon upon the Gospel of the day.



with you one word, not at all critical, but quite possibly useful in that particular inquiry in which I know some who came here this morning are interested. I had a word, but I shall refrain from saying it, because it is important that those who are so good as to join us here should be punctually released. If you will persevere with me, I believe we shall find some things of much more substantial value for meeting the perplexities of duty than any direct criticism of a movement which so far as it is good—I am speaking of Christian Science—is simply an undisciplined exhibition of what ought to be in all Christian hearts, and so far as it is bad will pass away, leaving behind it good results in those who seek for good.

## SECOND ADDRESS

### ST. PAUL'S APPEAL TO THE TEST OF POWER

THIS morning let us endeavour to illustrate the statement that the practical or 'force' view of life is a view native to Christianity and expressed with special fulness by St. Paul. But in order that we may attend to this without distraction, three words must be said in anticipation of what follows. Without these the word "power," whenever it occurs, will suggest an idea not properly belonging to it in Christian thought.

First, to say that Christianity is a power is not to say that Christians despise reason. There are men who are called "practical" because they do not think. It is not thus that an Apostle is practical.

Points for  
future ex-  
amination.

Secondly, to say that the Church is an exhibition of power is not to say that it is an exhibition of material force. There are men who call nothing practical unless it can be reduced to terms of stuff, to weights and measures; and, indeed, there are few men who think that a matter is practical unless



it can be reduced to terms of money or of money's worth.

We must part with both these ideas. The questions raised are worth deliberate attention. But it is well to state at this stage that by power I, at least, do not mean an unreasoning exertion of energy ; that I do not mean an exertion of energy necessarily confined to the sphere of matter.

In the third place, we must add that a reality of spiritual power is not on that account of necessity unconcerned with matter. A process of healing, for example, is not of necessity in any degree less spiritual simply because it makes use of what are called material means. Our sleep is not less a spiritual refreshment and dependent upon spiritual dispositions because the body also rests while sleep prevails.

These are the three points we may later examine deliberately :—First, that a reality of power is not divorced from reason ; secondly, that it is not necessarily material, and, thirdly, that it is not necessarily immaterial, in its mode of action.

One word from St. Paul is enough to show that his idea of power is not divorced from the idea of reason. When he says, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," he is himself—is he not ?—uttering a word. And it is a word of power. Indeed, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he says expressly that the "preaching of the Cross is the power of God."

Power is  
not di-  
vorced from  
reason.

A Church of power is not an unlearned or an unreflecting Church. A Christian life of power is not a life that neglects light and makes no effort to understand itself.

We may now, for a few steps, follow in St. Paul the great doctrine of power with which he is possessed. The New Testament word for power, *δύναμις*—familiar in the English word “dynamic”—is almost a Pauline word. It exists, indeed, in the first three Gospels, but in these it most usually refers to miraculous works within the sphere of sense. In its most general meaning it is very characteristic of St. Paul, and it is not characteristic of any other Apostle whose writings we possess. The word is used once in the First Epistle of St. Peter of the power of God which guards the redeemed,<sup>1</sup> and once of an order of spiritual beings.<sup>2</sup> In the Second Epistle of St. Peter *δύναμις* is used of the might of angels,<sup>3</sup> and in two other places of that very “Divine power,”<sup>4</sup> that “power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ”<sup>5</sup> to which our thoughts are turned. The word does not appear at all in St. James or in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John. And its absence from the last two books is very remarkable, because this holy Apostle is filled with the spirit of power and with the dynamic conception of life in Christ. He has penetrated

St. Paul's  
doctrine of  
power.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Pet. i. 3.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Pet. i. 16.

so far to find the character of the power, and to reveal it to those who will learn, that he has come to call it always by the supreme name which belongs to its true secret. He calls it "love." But St. Paul, and especially when speaking to the Corinthians, with whom it was necessary to use a large measure of reserve, did not at all times take his readers far into the secrets of God. He desired that the Corinthians should first understand that what he was directing was not an argument but a revolution. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." "I have not come," he says, "with persuasive skill, or brilliant exposition, or impressive eloquence." No man, as we know from his other writings, had a more autocratic command of all the resources of language. He was a lord of words. But when he comes to the Corinthians he discards wisdom of words. And why? It is because the Corinthians were by nature and training apt to rely too much upon verbal felicity, to think that if only a man could speak well everything was well. They also could speak well. They possessed facility in speech and the habit of society. And, accordingly, to them the Apostle writes: "Among you I maintained a reserve of knowledge." I believe that his words in that connection bear an emphasis somewhat different from the emphasis usually given to them. "I determined," says St. Paul, "to know nothing among *you* but Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

He preaches  
Christ  
crucified.

We know from this very Epistle and from the Apostle's other writings that his doctrine of Jesus Christ, all sufficient in substance, required for its utterance many developments besides the preaching of the Cross. It included Christ risen, Christ glorified, Christ dwelling in us. To preach Jesus is to say a last word ; but it is also to say a first. Nothing can be added in substance to this declaration of truth. But a message has been uttered which all the languages of heaven and earth, all the experience of the ages, can but continue without ceasing to unfold. Within the New Testament and in the words of St. Paul, we see the most eventful steps of this unfolding.

Even among the Corinthians we know that the Apostle gave no isolated teaching of the Cross.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, a doctrine of the death of Christ that did not take account of <sup>Among the</sup> ~~Corinthians.~~ His Resurrection and Ascension would not be the Christian "word of the Cross" at all. Even the special emphasis laid upon the shame of the Crucifixion and the bearing of our sins in His Body on the Tree, must draw all its force from the realization that the Crucified is the same Person as the risen and glorified Messiah. Still, among the Corinthians, at least at first, and before our First Epistle, such an emphasis there was in the Apostle's preaching, a special

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 1-9.

presentation of one aspect of the Gospel, the aspect naturally at a disadvantage in their minds ; the aspect in the acceptance of which the obedience of faith must least of all look for help from learning or from natural prejudice, and must depend most manifestly for proof upon the experience of moral deliverance and moral power. He would come to them, not in skilfulness of speech, not in the wisdom of this world, but in the foolishness of his message, so that it might be clear to them that their salvation depended not upon eloquent language admirably appreciated, but upon a power of health actually circulating in their spiritual and bodily frames. He was so fully determined that they should be impressed with this one truth that he reserved the explanation of the very power they were in fact receiving. There was to be another time when he would develop in words the nature of this power. He could speak wisdom among those who were perfect—that is, not among those who had nothing to look for from God and no progress in spiritual things to make, but those who were really in the grip of the Holy Spirit. Such men are called “perfect,” in the language of St. Paul. They are called “perfect,” not because they have reached the end of their course, but because they have become Christians in practical reality. They are in the possession of the Holy Spirit ; they are subject to the influence of Christ. “When,” he



says in effect, "you are endowed with that Spirit and subject to that influence, then I have harder lessons to give, lessons about the origin of that influence, about its nature, its growth, its movement, its interests ; I must show what favours its stability, its expansion, its development ; how it may be expressed, and what are its appropriate fruits and what its deeper secrets of insight into the goodness and glory of God. But all this must wait until you have turned, or been turned, in will to God, simply and entirely, so as to be the subjects of the influence ; until, receiving the first gift of understanding, you have owned that your salvation is the gift, not of the wisdom of men, but of the mercy of God." Grace must *possess* men first, and be *studied* by men afterwards. It was on this account that he spoke with great restraint. He congratulates his converts, you remember, with a touch of irony, on their enrichment in utterance and in all knowledge ; but, he adds, "I do not appeal to that admirable side of your spiritual life. I have come to preach the Gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should, by the natural attraction of novelty skilfully displayed, lose the mysterious but practical force of accepted sacrifice, that force by which it daunts and expels evil pride ; lest by the excellence of words the Divine appeal should vanish and pass away in words alone. The preaching of the Cross, indeed, is not at all attractive as a matter of words. To them that perish it



is foolishness. It is to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; but unto those who are called and who obey, who undergo a practical change, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. My speech was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and power ; it showed forth the fruits of the powerful presence of God in order that your faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God ; that it should be experimental, practical ; scientific rather than academic." When we read this great Epistle with special attention to this element of its general meaning, it appears that the first half of it is principally concerned with the iteration of the truth that the redeemed are not only the recipients of a message from God, but the subjects of a power from God.

We may now examine particularly the twentieth verse of the fourth chapter, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." "I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Here, I think, we may mark three meanings which go successively deeper into the sense of those words, "Not in word, but in power."

I. What is the most obvious meaning of that expression ? It condemns words that are simply

false or boastful. There were men in Corinth who were full of brave speeches, who talked the Apostle down, who were puffed up with the conceit of knowledge ; and the Apostle, with something quite magisterial in his tone, says, " I will come and find out, not how they talk, but what they can do. Let us see, not who is most eloquent, but who is strongest." His acceptance of their challenge was, no doubt, thought by some of his opponents quite brutal in its directness. He suspects their words of being simply false words ; not necessarily lying words, spoken with knowledge of their untruth and with intent to deceive, but words spoken without any justification—the words of men elated by their own facilities and energy of expression ; words elaborated without any corresponding labour of research ; words made vigorous without any corresponding vigour of industry ; words sharpened to a trenchant edge of definition without a corresponding sharpness of experience. He is speaking of men who believe their position to be strong, because the description of it has powerfully stirred their own hearts. To them the Apostle would come with signs of power. These signs of power were often outward signs. Sometimes, it would appear, he added his authority to that of the general body to deliver men, in the name and with the power of our Lord, to physical suffering, "for the

Words  
simply false  
or boastful.

destruction of the flesh," that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> In such ways, and in other ways no doubt quite different, he would show the power of God and break down opposition.

First, then, the kingdom of God is real and solid. It points to fact. It does not rely in the smallest degree upon boastful threats or extreme language. We do well to take that warning to ourselves, and it is possible that we need it especially at this time. You and I are tempted just now, as minorities are often tempted, to become a little eloquent, as if we might hope to have our own way if we pitch our claim high enough in language. That is not the way of the kingdom of God. We must be very suspicious of a victory which should be a victory in the strife of tongues, a triumph of reproach or invective. The word of mere falsehood we may, indeed, put on one side, and with a clear conscience. And yet how many—I will not say how many Christians, but how many days there are in the Christian life of every man when he has refused to face facts, to ask himself whether he was growing in grace, to watch whether he was overcoming temptation; when he has been satisfied if he could deceive others and deceive a part of himself by an explanation of his high motives! That is a lamentable desertion of the very

The kingdom  
of God real  
and solid.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. v. 4, 5; 1 Tim. i. 20.

rudiments of Christian life. We have most of us been guilty of it in our time.

II. The second meaning that belongs to the expression "not in word, but in power" is a little less direct. The Apostle means—does he not?—not only that his opponents' words can only prevail if they represent facts, but also that they may, in a certain sense, be right in words, and that he will be content to leave them the victory in debate, if only he may see the Gospel and the holy life prospering. Here is something apart from the reproach of boastfulness or lying. It is the contented, grave spirit which can endure with patience the triumph of opponents in argument if only God's good work may go on. How fretful we often are because the argument goes against us, because we cannot make others think as we do, because no one is ready to keep our faith in countenance! Great triumphs are celebrated against us poor Christians time after time in the name of natural science or metaphysics or history, and we are desperately anxious to get the verdict reversed. I think St. Paul would have said, "Well, if they must have the verdict, let them take it. I am content with the substantial spoils. I am content to see Christ grow rich with multitudes of new children drawn unto Himself, and those who please may carry off the honours of debate." I seem to have heard last week of

The  
Christian's  
patience in  
face of  
verbal  
victories.

some hero of American politics who gains no open triumphs in the Senate, but always gets his own way. Something like that, I think, was in St. Paul's mind in this moment. We ought to consider more carefully how this element of his mind was held in balance with other elements in great contrast with it. You know how careful he was to persuade. You know how he longed and laboured to make truth clear. That explanatory charity of his, what sacrifices it requires ! He will leave no stone of argument unturned in his search for the convincing plea. But still, there are times when he will say, "If I cannot make my message clear, let me try to make some life safe. Others shall have the applause of the critics if I may have the consolation, or rather if, while I am unconsolated, Christ, my Lord, may only hold fast those He seeks after ; for the kingdom of God is not in word, not in victory of debate, but in power of grace to save those who are fallen, to lift them out of the dust and the mire, and to set them with the princes ; so that while they find no satisfaction in my argument, they may, nevertheless, begin to enjoy a share in the eternal kingdom, because in the reality of the Divine government they are accomplishing the works which God has prepared for them to walk in."

How well content you and I should be, if it could be proved apparently, up to the hilt, that all our social endeavours were wrong—that it is



wicked to feed the children, to save the poor wanderers from the dark streets, to open out the crowded alleys, to bring health where there is sickness, and peace into the homes where peace now seems impossible ! how well content we should be to see the issue of thick volumes of essays on politics and economy to pulverize our case every month, if only we saw the streets where the poor live growing broader, and felt the air that is wanted pouring in ; if we might watch the young men growing up strong and brave, with a suitable education, and with a chance of clear conduct and straightforward industry ! We would suffer any one to have the last word if we could get one more boy set on his feet who, as things are, under the cruel stress of our modern competition, is, as far as we can see, doomed to go downhill to the waste-heap of lives. That, I think, is part of the spirit of St. Paul. "Let others have the victory in debate if I may have the souls ; for God's kingdom is not to be made of resolutions carried ; it is to be made of souls saved." Our England also will never be built of improved definitions. England, the new England, will be made of purer hearts and stouter limbs ; it is to be created, not in the fever of debate, but in the clear and perfect health that can only come from the willing sacrifices made by those who possess the earth, in favour of the disinherited. Let who will have the victory

The real  
victory.



of debate so only I may see the work go on ; for “the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.”

Before we leave that point, think how often in our own period we have had encouragement to pursue this practical course. For the victory in debate has almost always gone against us, excepting where that debate has been judged by the shrewdest minds. I think, indeed, that our Christian intellectual case is one that carries the day in the high court of appeal even here on earth. I think the strongest and the noblest minds see the force of our case. But if you appeal at a given moment to the large reading public the verdict may be against us. We have time after time been shown to be right, because (unfaithful though we are) we have been able to bring what was wanted to heal the evils of the real world ; and the real world is not mocked. You cannot, with a doctrine in its root unreasonable, meet a fact. A fact is always reasonable. The Church, the Gospel in action among men, must be proved reasonable by its power to deal with facts. And can we not stand up and show, with all shame indeed for our individual share—can we not stand up even now and, pointing to the recent past, declare that at least many of the movements effective for the improvement of the common life have been movements owing their inspiration to Christ ?

The facts of  
life refute  
theorists.

There are matters of secular interest in which the movement of the world has often refuted the victors in debate. How long ago was it that Bloch proved that war was impossible with modern long-range weapons? Were we not still trying to read his book when the war of 1899 broke out? If any one pleads that the African war was of a special nature and on a small scale, we may point to the great war in the Far East, which moved through terrible conflicts to an issue as great as any in history. And, remember, in the Manchurian war the tale of dead is due not, as in many wars, for the most part to disease, but to those very weapons of precision before which, we were told, it would be impossible to mass troops. "War is impossible," cries the theorist. And the smitten wives and mothers will answer, "You shall hold in peace your theory of its impossibility, if only you bring back our dead." "Not in word, but in power." The kingdom of this world also is not in word, but in power. Let us not, then, be alarmed; let us not be discontented if other men seem to have the last word, so long as we may cling to Christ and to the Power of His Holy Spirit.

Again (on the same head of the victory in debate), voices come to us from different quarters to teach that sin is no longer credible. Some energetic writers consider that we have parted with it as a superstition of the past. And there are

ardent, sympathetic, piously-touched souls who assemble for prayer and mutual encouragement, and who teach that sin is unreal. Such words as these may bear a perfectly true sense and one that has for ages been familiar in theology. But to persons untrained in philosophy or in divinity they carry a meaning in the highest degree false and pernicious. To these it means, not that sin lacks the substantial reality of holiness ; but that it had ceased to have its own sinful being. It means that sin is not sin. It means that good actions and bad actions are equivalent ; that "it makes no difference" what we do. There are young men who have abandoned the strife against the evil of the world, who surrender to the sin that so easily besets them, because they believe that the victory of debate is with those who set out to prove the non-existence of evil. And meanwhile? Meanwhile sin deflowers our life, and ravages our homes. No one who has met with sin and known its hateful touch can ever be consoled by the graceful arguments which set forth that there is no such thing, or that it is only virtue in the making. We are asked to believe about the great capitals, that their horrors are the rudiments of good, that they are but the strong fumes of a laboratory where the beautiful future is passing through the process of manufacture in the crucible of civilization. Well, to hear these crucibles talked about is very

The alleged  
unreality  
of sin.

tolerable. I can bear it quite well as a phrase, that phrase about the laboratories. If it consoles you to say that the horrors of crowded cities are only the passing fumes of a precious thing in the making, be satisfied with your phrase. For my part I will rescue whom I can from the poison-vapours. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. Is this not a true second meaning of the Apostle's words?—You may have the dialectical victory so long as I may see the little children who tell falsehoods telling them no more, and the poor girls who have deserted virtue finding themselves again in happy homes. I am content for myself (though I am sorry for you), that you should continue to say that the horrors of the great sinful cities of modern life are no horrors. By all means have your phrase, if I may have the souls for Christ.

III. But there is a third element of meaning, if not in the particular words of the verse, certainly in the Epistle at large. The Apostle meant not only to challenge the false word of piety, or the false boast of miracles, and to confront them with his more powerful inspiration; he meant not only to discard and leave to his opponents the victories of speech; he also meant to declare that he could not be content with changing men's opinions. Their victory of argument could not daunt him. But then his own victory of argument could not

Changed  
views of  
life not  
sufficient.

satisfy him. It is not sufficient, he teaches, for men's salvation, to change their view of life.

Here we come near the root of Christian divisions and doubts. There have always been in the Christian body those who supposed that Christ came only that we might be consoled, as a mourner is consoled by a sympathetic visitor; that He came to persuade us that evil is not evil, in effect; that He came to stop tears which ought not to flow, and to dispense with a sorrow which ought never to have grieved us; not to bind up the broken heart, but to assure us that it was never broken. It has been supposed, quite wrongly, that we are saved if we think we are saved; that Divine justifying faith justifies us when we believe that we are justified. The faith that justifies is the faith by which we trust Christ, and trust Him to change us. He came to save men really from sin; not, as the word was, forensically. His mercy does not operate to make men seem or be accounted what they are not, but to create in them what God desires; to render them fit for heaven, not to bring them to a heaven for which they are not fit. The word of His Gospel is not a word which represents men as other than they are. It is a word which promises and gives them the grace to become what is good. He came to save us by making us safe, and we can only be made safe in ourselves.

Root of  
Christian  
divisions.



We can only be brought to God, if God be brought to us. If the work of mercy were the work of consoling speech, might not God have well fulfilled His mercy by declaring through an angel's voice the offer of a pardon not joined to sanctifying grace? It need not cost the death of God to save men in that wise. A word would have sufficed. But the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power; not in sentiment, but in action.

God, when He came to save us, sent no trumpet-blast of promise across the world; He sent His only begotten Son. And Christ, God's salvation. to redeem us from Hell, engraved no golden message in the sky, that men might see it and admire and take heart; He fastened no proclamation there with studs of light, no constellation of good news; He yielded Himself to be nailed to the bitter Cross. He condemned sin where it lived, in the flesh; not His sinless flesh, but that sin-stained flesh of our race which sinlessly He shared. He sought out evil where it was in action. He killed it, not by the exhibition in word of a Divine prerogative, but by the costly sacrifice of a life of holiness, retracing in our nature the downward path which we had trod. That nature of ours which He made His own was lifted up by the actual greatness of His own life. He raised it, not by the momentary use of super-human privilege, but by the Divine perseverance of a truly human sanctity, a daily industry of



obedience to the will of His Heavenly Father and ours. His salvation is holy, actual, costly ; it is substantial, wrought of blood and toil in human limbs ; wrought out of actual woe and fear in a heart really made to be the heart of God ; wrought in sweat of conflict with Satan who had ensnared us ; wrought not in poetry of beautiful imagination, but in the exquisite reality of pure life in the flesh of man himself. This is how God saved us. His salvation is accomplished, not in proclamation or in fancy, or in a promise to take us some day as if we were what we are not to be, but in laying His Hand upon our wound and healing it. "He bore our sicknesses and carried our infirmities." His cure was not found in a flattering consolation, an invitation to consider that broken legs have no existence. He strengthened those who could not walk, and made them stand. He did not invite us to shift our point of view. He lifted us out of the mire and set our feet upon the rock.

This actuality of our Saviour's dealing with sin, and also with pain, is quite unaffected by any philosophic view about the place of phenomena in the scheme of being. It is, no doubt, perfectly true of all external things that they are not real in the sense in which the soul and thought are real. There is no ultimate and independent reality but spirit. But this truth, of course, cuts both ways. If there is no reality in my consumptive chest, there is no

Our  
Saviour's  
dealing  
with sin  
and pain.

reality in the open-air hutch in which I am put to sleep it sound again. And why for an unreal disease may I not use an unreal medicine, if it is found that a certain sequence in the one group of phenomena is associated with a happy sequence in the other group of phenomena? I do not believe that medicines are real any more than diseases are. But there is a definite kind of appearance which suits another definite kind of appearance from which I occasionally suffer. The phenomenon of food exactly meets the case when I am associated with another phenomenon known to sense as hunger or exhaustion. The idealist philosophy has nothing whatever to do with these questions. Its influence here is equal in all directions. The question of the relative importance of particular mental states and particular bodily conditions; the question whether we might not do more for the body by helping the mind, is altogether another question from that to which the idealist position in philosophy is so far the most promising answer. In a world whose halting limbs and blinded eyes are not real as the soul is real, Christ our Lord still went about doing good. He healed. He helped men not by persuading them to recognize the relative character of their woes, but by applying to them out of the riches of His mercy the equally relative endowment of health. And this work was a type and symbol of His dealing with sin. Just as in face of the misery, sickness, and

destitution of the world, all of them contingent (as philosophers say), and not absolute, he produced the practical cure ; so also in face of the real disease of sin—which is substantial in a vastly different sense, because it is a real alienation of the real spirit from the creative Spirit of God—there also He did not say, “Be cured by thinking yourself cured” ; but “Have faith in Me, and believe in the Power,” and the power saved them. “There went forth virtue from Him, and He healed them all.” “The Power of the Lord was present to heal.”

His salvation, therefore, was real in Himself. It was real in its cost. It was real in its method.

His salvation real. It was not, if we may dare to say so, a relaxation of the judgements of God. It was an exercise of the sacrificial love of God.

It is real in Christ, and it must be real in us. And it can only be ours, if our wills by His mercy and grace are submitted to Him, so that our lives may be actually cleansed ; and so also that the cleansing really effected in the fountains of the streams of motive may be actually manifested and developed in the common details of daily life. For the kingdom of God, St. Paul would say, is not in fancy, not in fine words, but in good actions ; not in thinking ourselves well, but in growing well ; not even, if that were possible, in being whole and righteous inwardly, in the sanctuary of life alone ; but by that sanctuary being so possessed by grace

that from it healing flows through all the acts and all the hours.

“Little children, be not deceived,” says St. John, confirming our Apostle’s words—“Little children, be not deceived ; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, after the same fashion as Christ is righteous.” He, for our sake, wrought the great works of salvation in our flesh, that we also, in the flesh that sinned, in the minds that have fallen away from God, and in the spirits that have deserted His love, may be turned back to the substantial fountain of our health, and be saved because we are made that which God created us to be, and really do those very things which are well-pleasing in His sight.

### THIRD ADDRESS

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN POWER

THE subject we have chosen—the power of Christian life—seems at first sight, and is in fact, quite simple ; and yet, simple as the facts are, what we know about them can only be expressed as thought finds its way through certain perilous confusions. It follows that in regard to this subject it is more than usually necessary to say that when a man sets certain terms in contrast he does not thereby accept or reject either of the contrasted terms ; that silence in the speaker does not of necessity mean denial of the thing which is not spoken, nor even a personal failure to appreciate that side of the truth which is left unspoken. A man, for example, may lead a life which bristles with miracle, and yet, on a given day, he may make it his object to show that a religion which was largely without miracles in personal experience might be none the less, on that account, real and none the less spiritual. The silence of the preacher does not imply denial of what is left unsaid ; and, I shall venture to add, silence on the part of those



who hear need not imply acceptance of what is said. Letters are often very valuable, and especially if they lead to personal interviews and the recruiting of hopeful and energetic men for the work of God. Those who preach may well be thankful when, by means of letters, their own minds are enlarged by contact with minds which have worked in a different manner ; or when the like-minded are thus brought to a fruitful co-operation. But it would not be fair to accept that very real help without saying that an enlargement of personal association and of controversy face to face is more valuable still ; and that we who speak imperfectly, and under strict limits of time, should be unfairly taxing our correspondents if we invited them to convey to us by letter their many good thoughts on the extended subjects we partially treat. A man may recommend a particular pen without forgetting the advantages of good paper and ink. He may urge—to take another example—the necessity of simple worship to meet the case of hard-worked people, without forgetting that human fellowship and sympathy are absolutely necessary for the propagation of all forms of religion, simple and learned alike. He may declare that truth is social power without denying that it is first inward light. *L'un n'empêche pas l'autre.*

Now we are to try to get rid of some of those obscuring thoughts that hinder the full effect of the great truth that the kingdom of God is in power



and not in word. The chief obscurer of the doctrine, the chief obstacle to the action, of the

power of grace is the contrary doctrine—  
 Verbalism the chief obstacle. the doctrine that the kingdom of God is in word only ; that it is a point of

view, a way of looking at the world, a method of expression to which one has only to be consistent. That mental position is the commonest of all, in rich and in poor alike. “What the gentleman says is very true,” was the remark, now almost classical, of a listener in a South London Mission : “What the gentleman says is very true, but I don’t hold with it.” It was not the *kind* of truth that the speaker wished to acquire. That remark finds a parallel in the unspoken thoughts of many of us. For we are still under the bondage of the notion that the world is an affair of opinion ; that you must keep to the opinion you have once taken up, without asking whether thereby you have divorced yourself from the present, and debarred yourself from contributing to the formation of the future. I am a Church of England man, for example. Is my Anglicanism a kind of selective attention, content to leave unrecognized large ranges of Christian fact ? I am—let us press hypothesis to bolder flights—a High Churchman. Am I never to ask myself whether, after all these years, I have been sufficiently watchful for the opportunities of actual service ? It will not be enough to have kept to the lines once adopted, if, after all, there are real things

waiting to be done which are not to be done on those lines. The world is not a matter of opinion. It will not be enough for us simply to have kept in one story all through our time. We must be on the watch for the actual currents of life, and learn how we can serve God in co-operation with the forces which exist ; how we can bring into society the power of grace which God Almighty bestows upon the world by a channel built of the hearts of those who believe. We must be found as faithful servants in the real scene of service ; we must be busy in the posts really assigned ; with the lamps lighted and the garments girt ; grasping, that is, the essential truth and ready to move for actual tasks. Sometimes I am afraid that one has been like a child in a boat, who delights to think he is rowing when really he is not. Am I working up to my weight in the boat ? It is very easy in some positions, when childhood is long past, to go through the actions of labour without contributing force to the task, to be the man in the crew whose oar only moves past the boat with the moving water on account of an advance created by the other rowers. Is one's position in the Church—each man must ask the question with all the seriousness of a vital and pressing interest—at all like this of the useless rower ? Is one living on opinion, on a consistency of thought, on keeping up one story, on retaining one point of view ? Or is one finding out how things really move and

trying to do the service of God in the existing situation ?

That, then, is the chief enemy, the loud doctrine of opinion. The chief enemy is not materialism, but verbalism.

But if we put on one side the great enemy, we have next to acknowledge that the true doctrine of the force of God finds hindrance in Secondary hindrances. confusions which we may study under three principal heads named, by anticipation, in an earlier address. First, there is the wrong thought sometimes present in the minds of those who see the importance of power, the thought that so long as there is power we need not be concerned about reason. That I dare not touch at all to-day. It is a most important hindrance and corruption of the true doctrine. The strong, silent men are quite dangerous if they are silent only because they cannot render a reason.

The second corruption is the notion that nothing is a real exhibition of power which does not produce material results.

The third is the notion that nothing is a spiritual exhibition of power which does not avoid the production of material results.

Between these two last positions, considered as extremes, there exists a singular state of mind—singular from the point of view of logical consistency, but not singular in fact, for it is widely experienced. Indeed, it is an opinion or state of mind

shared by all of us in some degree, at some time, and with respect to some of our affairs. I claim no exemption from it. It is the notion that spiritual force does not cease to be spiritual when it produces material results, but does cease to be spiritual when it employs material means. There are some who think so much of the material result that they consider—and who does not sympathize with them?—that a spiritual energy, such as prayer, manifests its reality only when it produces effects in the body and in the affairs which surround us. The spiritual energy is thought to be real because of its material results; and material events are thought spiritual because of their isolation from material antecedents. We are so far from thinking that material results discredit the spirituality of an energy that we think that they are necessary to certify it. We think little of a religion which cannot cure our bodily ailments. I understand and sympathize with this judgement; but I am sure it is a defective judgement. Yet, the judgement thus plainly defective is associated, in the same mind, with a judgement equally partial in the opposite direction. For the man who refuses to recognize as spiritual the energies which have no material result will often exclude, as unspiritual in origin, the results which are reached by material machinery. How can we justify this exclusion? For if spiritual energies are suitably manifested when they touch the phenomenal, the material

Spiritual  
force and  
material  
means.

scene, how is the spiritual energy discredited because it touches the material scene a little earlier rather than a little later? How can the general nature of the operation be affected by the point in the series at which the spiritual force enters? Why is one energy spiritual which comes in at the end and produces a result, while another energy is unspiritual because it comes in earlier in the story, and in order to produce the result of health, lights (say) the fire and keeps a bronchitis-kettle steaming? You say the bronchitis-kettle is material. Well, is not the bronchitic chest material also? And if the spirit is to come in at all, it cannot matter at what point it comes in. This welcome of the result, while we reject what are usually the means, is difficult to justify. I am not speaking of it from outside. I share it. I desire to examine it, to see what measure of truth it has, and what rank it occupies in the range of truth; to ask whether it ought not to develop and advance to something more solidly, more permanently, true.

I will repeat one word to indicate its eccentricity from the point of view of mere criticism, an impersonal criticism. It regards as suspect some spiritual energy that does not produce effects in the body. The interior man, the follower after prayer, the contemplative, the ascetic who is called more particularly spiritual, is often the very man who looks to see his neighbour-



ascetic elevated from the floor in prayer. We might, if we were in a critical mood, call him a materialist, for it is precisely the material result that he thinks most manifestly Divine. I do not think that he is altogether wrong, but I think that we are wrong in calling him particularly spiritual. Now, that question of prayer, and the wonderful changes which are produced in the minds and frames, the homes and atmosphere of those who seek after God by the spirit, is a subject full of sacred memories, and calling for the most delicate reserve. I would rather, for the most part, leave it alone. Perhaps every one of those to whom I speak has had his wonderful experience of the way in which the unseen power of God has been made manifest to our blunted sense by things which, if we read of them in books, we should call miracles. We have seen the healings ; we have seen the lightening of the eyes ; we have seen the taming of disorderly emotions ; we have seen the purifying of what appears to be the moral atmosphere of a house. We have a thousand reasons for believing in the reality of all those wonderful effects. We know that our lives are much more influenced by the forces that are unseen than by the forces that are seen. We know, perhaps, that we have owed a great deal more to persons whom we have never seen, or to persons whom we see no longer, owed to them a great deal more of good and of evil,



than to any of those friends with whom we walk in middle life. Each of us has his story about that. All of us know in our hearts how real and true is that side of experience. But it is too delicate, too sacred for discussion.

Let us consider instead the commonplace subjects of building institutions and collecting funds. These illustrate my point without distressing a reserve which is rightly sensitive. Now, who is the faithful, the spiritual man when it is a question of creating an orphanage? Surely, the man who works by prayer alone. Müller, 'by faith,' builds his orphanage, and maintains from week to week his vast family in Bristol. Don Bosco, 'by faith,' 'by prayer,' without committee or subscribers, educates for the ministry armies of friendless boys. A *novena* of supplication, kept by some poor people at Poplar, finished the task of church-building in which influential appeals, eloquent speeches, and the zeal of a great college confronting a rare opportunity, seemed to make only a long beginning.

So sure, so memorable, if we do not deliberately forget, are the solid successes of the way of faith.

But part of the success is the redemption of an earthly thing. Bosco's seminary is held, even at the beginning, in a room, a room with a picture of De Sales upon the wall. Müller's Homes, St. Frideswide's Church, are built of stone or

An illustration.

bricks, and paid for with shillings and pounds. How can one get this matter clear? A man is spoken of as being a peculiarly believing man, a spiritual man, and one who is doing his work by the operations of the Spirit alone. But into the process, sooner or later, there enters a link quite clearly material; for when the believer says, "I trust to faith alone," he does not mean that the contractor must accept payment in coin of faith. There is a fund to meet the charge. He proposes to fill the fund by faith and then to draw upon it with cheques. Is it not plain that our minds are not quite clear about this matter? If "by faith alone" means without use of means, then a house built by faith alone would be a house simply prayed about and rising into stately form as prayer proceeded. But if, finally, the house is made of bricks and stones and mortar, and built by strong gentlemen entitled to bare arms, who work hard, and feed wives and children on the wages which they weekly draw for their work, we must admit that into the purest work of faith, force and material enter at some stage, unless we are content with a house of faith and virtue all compact. The work of faith produces at last in this case a material result, and it produces it by material machinery. We must, it seems, part with the notion that the energy is less spiritual in proportion as it uses means, if, that is, we desire the energy at last to produce

material results. There is, thank God, a great work of the Spirit which has, at any rate primarily, no material results at all; and this work needs no material means. But this is often precisely the work of the Spirit in which many of us are eager to welcome and to multiply the material elements. A robust faith may here also support and redeem a considerable weight of furniture. Another faith, more detached or else more easily imprisoned, more independent or less adventurous, may rightly discard or avoid many visible accompaniments. But in such a matter as house-building, the case is different. In the holy work of building a good school or organizing an industry, we should certainly not become in the least degree more spiritual by dispensing with the ordinary means.

In the halting and prudish spiritualism that shrinks from 'means' we must recognize a very real danger. There are those who in the name of faith neglect their accounts, incur debts without any prospect of paying them, refuse to obtain an expert opinion about the nature of the drains, let the young people whom they shelter work in unhealthy conditions, and say, in effect, to science and the State, "Keep away your profane inspector. We do this work on a foundation of faith. We are sure that the children will not get ill. We have placed them under the protection of God and the holy saints." All the time the dear little people

A real  
danger.

have diphtheria on account of an insufficiency in the water supply, or make soft bones for want of milk. It is a very real danger—this notion that a work will be more spiritual if we neglect all the proper means, while at the same time we wish to produce a material result—a material result, it is true, which is desired and valued only for the sake of effects ultimately spiritual, but still in the first instance material.

Now, the state of mind here criticized is sound and true up to a certain point. I fully recognize its justification. I look for miracles, and find them. I am quite sure that God from time to time strikes in upon our dulness with a wonderful revelation of His presence where all the things by which He usually helps us are withdrawn. But the state of mind that recognizes the wonders is not one of advanced but of rudimentary spirituality. And if in the mercy and providence of God, a certain special character in events really corresponds to this early state of faith, yet, perhaps, that stage in the development of the Divine government is not a stage of highly advanced promotion. May it not rather be a stage, a position which God provides for infants in faith, meant to lead them to one less marvellous to sense, and at once more exacting and more generous to filial faith? When the tokens are hidden, and there is no open vision, a voice sounds for Samuel in his obedience.

Something like the same advance may be recognized in a philosophic doctrine and temper in some respects akin to spirituality. I mean Idealism. An undeveloped, weak, and half-hearted idealism may shrink from the use of means; but a robust idealism claims them all. A thorough-going idealist would not be in the smallest degree shaken in his idealism because every sort of powerful weapon was employed for his ends. He would say, "All objects and events alike have their being in mind. The surgeon's knife is as truly a mental product as the suggestor's healing thought." Perhaps the philosophic temper seldom needs education so elementary. Faith both needs and welcomes it. When spiritual faith is young and feeble, sincere but inexperienced, it recognizes the evidence of spirit where the evidences of material process are weak and scarce. But when belief becomes mature, exercised, and robust, it sees the work of God in all things alike. It claims them all for God. And, in correspondence with the more robust development of faith, God Himself confronts that riper spiritual apprehension with a state of things where miracles have become rare because all the ordinary process of nature is perceived to be Divine. There is—may we not say?—no longer need for men to be startled by an exhibition of the mighty Hand of God, when they have begun to trace His work,



I had almost said, to read His heart, in the common incidents of life, and in those vast movements in which we perceive some measure of regular and inevitable succession, and, in the measure of that perception, declare the sovereignty of 'natural law.'

This growth of faith from exceptional encounter to habitual insight may be marked in many different departments. It is very evident, <sup>The growth of faith.</sup> for example, in the work of apologetics.

There is an infant apologetic that seeks the evidence of the Divine government of the world in the interstices of natural order ; that offers for the grounds of faith the imperfections of science. The form of the argument is : "We cannot account for this fact ; therefore God thus ordered it." And if we can account for the fact, must we not equally conclude that God has given it existence and form ? The same stage is found in the first instinctive criticism of life. When the hurricane swept the roof from his house in the West Indies, "We felt," wrote John Sterling, "that we were in God's Hands." It is the verdict of feeling. While the roof stands fast there is something between us and God, something else to trust to. So we all have felt ; and in John Sterling, no doubt, as in all the wise, reason made its after-statement, told its surer truth, that when the stoutest castle stands in seasons of calm weather, there is none but God to trust. But



feeling falls back on the Divine protection, when the roof gives way. This occasional dependence is the analogue of the infant apologetic.

That infant apologetic, that infant faith, is true so far as it goes. And when men are in that state God gives them such proof as they can receive. He shows them the saint who walks upon the water or lives without food. He allows Elisha to send his staff to be laid upon the child, and presently to set his sacred body mouth to mouth with the dead, and raise him to life. He breaks through our unbelief ; He shocks our blindness ; and when the eyes are opened and raised, He meets them with plain tokens. The infant faith requires the food of infants ; and we shall require it to the end. But in that temper of infantile spirituality there lurks a deep materialism ; it hides far down a conviction that what is not wonderful is not of God. If the doctor healed their child, many would give no thanks to God. So God, to meet their half-awakened faith, dispenses with the means, that He may catch them where they are, meet them on the narrow path of their prejudice, teach them in their infancy. For this is not an evil state of thought ; this is only an early state of thought. The green Madonnas of Siena are not bad pictures, but they are very early pictures ; and the state of mind I have endeavoured to indicate is not a bad state of mind, it is a great advance upon

the self-confident blindness of materialism. But, on the other hand, it is a state of mind which ought to grow ; and in its growth it should claim the whole field of what are called means. It will thus become not less but more spiritual.

No doubt there is an anti-spiritual temper which trusts to the means on the ground that they do not belong to God. There is a mind that desires to be independent of God. That is one form of recoil from this false, or rather early, spirituality. <sup>The dangers of anti-spirituality and materialism.</sup> For one of the great dangers which beset a rudimentary religious faith is that when people find, as they think, their prayers unanswered, and, on the other hand, when some advertised drug succeeds, they give up the 'faith' which does not heal, and take to the drug instead, the drug which, if it were the elixir of life itself, is a poison of poisons when it becomes the rival and substitute for faith. There is, then, the danger of recoil into materialism. And this can only be permanently avoided by the genuine developement of faith, its growth to the stature in which it claims all the means. Such a growth has really taken place in the historical developement of the Church.

In the early days of the Church, when the world about it was unleavened, when the bridges and the roads were the work of unbelieving men, when the art of medicine itself was partly idolatry,

God bestowed, in the presence of His Spirit, new and strange powers upon believers, so that they effected 'by faith alone' works God's special gifts of power. now usually accomplished by the special training of separate professions. They spoke Persian without being taught ; they healed the sick without remedies, as many do now. They, no doubt, traversed sometimes, like St. Philip the deacon, long distances without any apparent conveyance for the journey ; they were "seized by the Spirit, and found at Azotus." All this was granted because they lived in a world where the public coaches were unredeemed ; where the medical knowledge was mixed with sin ; where the linguistic acquirements were without faith in God. But since then the Church has made or begun a certain conquest or assimilation of things once dead. Like a plant, it has laid hold of all the soil round about it, and filled that soil with its roots and with its fragrance. It has marked the map of the world with the names of its first heroes. It has given to the year a fresh division, after the proportions of the mysteries of the Incarnation. It has laid hold of all the things of earth, and lifted them to a heavenly power. It has led the eternal Gospel into the narrow channel, as an unspiritual criticism would think it, of little black letters for the instruction of little black people. And therein it has shown its triumph. It uses the print

because it wants the print. It wants the print for the print's sake. It wants medical art for medical art's sake.

For what is the necessary correlative of a spirituality which rides aloof from the world? It is a world bereft of the Spirit. A Christianity that need not talk Latin <sup>Spirituality and the world.</sup> means—does it not?—a Latin that cannot talk Christ. A Christianity that need not build bridges means bridges which are excluded from the service of God. A Christianity that does not ransack the earth for drugs and bring all the trees of the field into the service of the sick means a huge vegetation, an unexplored mass of minerals, which have never paid their toll to God in Christ, never been allowed their hour of labour for His poor; cannot inherit His blessing: “Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these My brethren.” Is it not plain that every exclusive movement of the spiritual forces produces of necessity a corresponding mass of unvitalized humanity, of unvitalized matter? If we are always to heal by the simple word of the Gospel alone, as men are sometimes allowed to heal, what is to become of the medical profession? I am not afraid of its scientific decay; I am afraid of its spiritual decay; I am afraid of its ceasing to be Christian. This truth of the loss which is correlative with exclusion you may see clearly enough when you look at a different class, the class of the clergy. We

sometimes say in our clerical meetings that bishops, priests, and deacons are not enough ; they are mechanical, unilluminated, prosaic ; admirable as the officers of an organization ; unfit to be the leaders of an inspired adventure. We must have another set of men to minister the Word, men finely touched to fine issues. And what then is to become in that case of the hierarchy ? Are you prepared to see a clerical order abandoned to unspiritual ministrations ? An unordained class of prophets, of whom and of whom alone the higher gifts of evangelical activity were characteristic, would mean an unspiritual mass of ordained persons. This must follow if the new prophetic body is to be a rival and an improved substitute for the official ministry. If, on the other hand, there was an awakening of the holy people of God to their proper work of prophecy and sacrifice, this would itself be the strongest means of spiritualizing the official chiefs. We need all the Lord's people. We need, as a people, even the external means in their order and degree. I believe the temporal necessities of spiritual work are means appointed for the redeeming of money and industry. It is only so that they can be lifted out of the dust, and promoted to a share in the work of God's kingdom. When we bring any gift of power or wisdom to His service, then He lifteth our life in that respect out of weakness and setteth it among princes. The shrinking from material things is



unspiritual ; or, more truly, it comes from a spirituality which is infantile and elementary. And we must press on to gain so close a grasp of the eternal power and love and perpetual presence of God, that all things shall be transparent and manifest His glory.

For my part, I can faithfully say—I should be unfaithful if I said less—that I prefer the state in which I find myself to any state which is recorded in the more romantic history of the past. I believe that our present state is a larger developement of the power of the Incarnation ; that the way in which we move now, needing and using all kinds of helps and appliances, means that a greater range and a more inward substance of reality is redeemed by our Blessed Lord. If I could cross to Africa next time ‘by miracle,’ it would, no doubt, create an admirable sensation ; but I do not believe it would be so Christian a passage as one by steamer. For by the work of the Gospel the steamship-lines themselves are so far the more redeemed. Every missionary they carry is all to the good for them. And you know how willing they are to carry them, and how generous. It is an occasion for charity. It is a spiritualizing of the very screw. It is an enlistment of the officers and engineers, and of all the men, for the work of the Gospel ; and they are far from being unconscious of the fact. I think that, if the Mission

A larger developement of the power of the Incarnation.



of Help to South Africa, which spent I forget how much of freewill offerings in carrying men across by the Union Castle line, had been able to send them all across on their cloaks, like monks of ancient story, Africa, England, and the sea would have been the poorer thereby. Let no man think that to the modern Church miracles are the inaccessible grapes judged sour. They are the fruits once coveted as exceptional, but to a triumphant faith merged in the daily supply.

Do not we see this advance in our own personal life of conversion? When a man is first converted

The life of conversion. —I do not mean only converted from sin to the love of God's law, but converted from opinion to that bright manifestation of His Presence which God gives us in prayer—when a man first learns that Christ is not One Whom he is to believe in with great difficulty, but One Who dwells with him and in him; then God lays His Hand upon this man with tremendous force. His frame is bowed down; he knows every day in his prayer, by sensible experience, the awful evidence of infinite love. But as the life of conversion is persevered in, and faith becomes more sincere and simple, it becomes also less covetous of such evidence. It requires no longer those festivals of a Christian infancy. It is content with a removal of the sensible tokens of Divine benediction. The soul cries out: "Remove from me, if it be Thy pleasure, the

light of Thine Eyes, lest the glory of the manifestation should become an ornament of a selfish life, should be drawn into the circle of an earthly treasure-house. Let me rather be required to go forth after Thee into the darkness beyond the scope of sense. Let me rather know in my heart the desolation which ought to belong to it until Thy beauty is revealed to all men." So it is in the life of conversion. So it is that the morning hour of peculiar evidences no longer stands alone ; and the man finds in his ordinary ministry, in his trudge along the road, in his service for the poor, in his speaking to those who will listen, in his headaches and toilsome nights, the power of the Holy Spirit, which at first he only knew in a bright interruption of the daily round of toil.

This is the proper road of the Divine development, because thereby God, from the inner sanctuary of love, emerges to lay hold upon all the outer provinces of being.

The Divine development.

We need not regret the past days of wonder and the distant lands of Christian romance, if we will but live in faith. He has His evidence to show us in what men call the ordinary organization of life in love. Is it not, after all, when judged by the test of experience, more divinely piercing to see or to think of the surgeon, the physician, the nurse, in their daily work ; to remember the mother who watches at night over her child with the croup ; the father who comes

home early and refuses his little hour of pleasure and society in the inn, which is his club, in order that his child may have more and fresher milk ; is it not more piercing to think of all this and a thousand works of kindness enacted every day, than to see some highly-gifted person who should pass from point to point healing all sickness by a gesture of his hand or by the accents of his voice ? I find myself nearer God when I think of the self-sacrifice of the poor watcher than I do when I think of the miraculous powers, which I entirely believe in, of those on whom God chooses to bestow for special purposes an unusual means of restoration. The toil of nursing is more divine, because fuller of love, more costly, more like Jesus, Who, though He must in accordance with the prerogative of His Divine dignity heal men by His touch and by His presence, yet showed in the course of His earthly life that He made the broader manifestation of His Divinity when He went about in toil and pain and hunger to do good ; when He dipped His finger in the earth ; when the Body of Christ, the Body that is God's own, was nailed, through His submission, to the tree. It is in laying hold of *all* the means that the Divine power is both shown and developed. For thus it is not only more clearly manifested ; it is also more widely effectual.

If we will seek after the spiritual union with God, then all those works which do not touch the

material means shall go forth from us, and effect their purpose in great power ; and they are many and most important. And those other operations which are to have material results will justify themselves more and more powerfully, and will do their work with more and more blessing, because they recruit larger and larger ranges of the earthly things which lie dead until they are taken up into the power of the Holy Spirit.

I am sure that the longer we think of this the more clearly we shall see its truth. Is it not true that you could read without tears that story of Elisha's healing, if it were not for the word of the boy, "My head ! my head !" and the bereaved mother's answer, "It is well" ? These are the things which pierce ; the natural cry for sympathy in human pain ; the triumphant love which passeth beyond death. The story of the staff and of the Prophet's healing of the boy, this I believe ; but I believe it without trembling, and I believe it without tears. I cannot read without tears the story of the poor man marred by fire, whose face is frightfully altered as the result of an heroic venture to save children's lives, and who, in his consideration for others' feelings, hides himself in the dark.<sup>1</sup> I would rather come into contact with that tender spirit, bearing the grim brand of charity uncanceled by any miracle of privilege, than see the children he rescued at such

<sup>1</sup> *Three at Table*, by W. W. Jacobs.

cost saved from the fire without sacrifice by the benediction of a wonder-working saint.

Or, if we pass from listening and reading and imagination, I can speak from experience, as every one who hears could also, if it were his turn to speak. Many have seen the revelation which shines on a Christian death-bed ; many have spent long days with the afflicted. I remember many piercingly happy and sorrowful hours spent with the leper men and boys in Robben Island, whose faces are marred beyond recognition and whose lives are all exile. I have had speech with many. I recall one now in his bed in the corner who told me how inexpressibly dear was the Presence of his loving Saviour to him ; and I feel now, as I felt then, that if God should give me the power of restoring to that leper the beauty of his infancy at the price of robbing him of one thought of his Redeemer, I would leave the miraculous healing alone.

It is better, it is higher, it is more spiritual that a young man should go forth from the ranks of his brothers to his dark lodging in Smithfield, and spend the early and brightest years of youth, when the call of the river and the woods is clearest in his ears, in that hard drudgery of the course of service for poor mothers in their greatest need—it is better, more spiritual, more Christ-like, more Divine, that he and the constantly recruited band of such students should bend their eyes and spend



their brains in acquiring all the range of medical knowledge, so that they may be able to help the least of God's children, than if, with less love, or even with a love which was not more than equal to theirs, they could, without toil and pain, and only 'miraculously' qualified, go forth as sudden healers of every person upon whom their shadow fell. I believe that the Christian doctor is a riper fruit of the Divine Grace of Christ than any mere wonder-worker that can be conceived. And I believe that the great works of road and bridge, of civilization and peace, of police and law, and learning and medicine ;—that the transmission of sound knowledge by education, done by skill and energy and costly industry, in the faith of Christ, and by the impulse of love, are themselves among the "greater works" of which Christ spoke when He said of His disciple, "Greater works than these shall he do, because I go to My Father."



## FOURTH ADDRESS

### THE PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

WE need two more hours to complete the survey I proposed to myself, but no additional two hours can be obtained. It is disappointing to leave the little I have to say incomplete. We must endeavour to choose for expression, not what will give to our discussion the best air of completeness, but rather the dangers which most seriously hinder spiritual endeavour.

A plea for practical endeavour may be itself very unpractical. A man may give a complete account from his own point of view of the advantages of a practical Christian life, and yet leave unchallenged the things which actually make Christian life unpractical. When men are setting out upon a long journey it is the more complete work to make an outline of the broad ocean they propose to traverse and the lands they hope to reach. An outline-map, slightly sketched, may be relatively complete as a scientific whole ; but for the purposes of the voyage, it is more profitable to chart the rocks in

What has  
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the estuary from which the ship must start. It will be in vain to complete an outline of the ocean and the islands if the ship is wrecked soon after leaving dock. I ask myself, then, to-day, What are the things which really have in the past tended to make Christian life unpractical? And I repeat the answer. The doctrine of the practical nature of spiritual life, when it has passed its great opponent—namely, the delusion that spiritual life is a matter of opinion—is hindered and discredited first by irrationalism, the notion that so long as we work hard enough it does not matter what we think; secondly, by a false spiritualism which rejects all material results; and thirdly, by a false religiousness which looks for power only in material energy and material results. Between these last two considered as extremes is the condition of thought so imperfectly considered last time, the state of mind of those who, relying on spiritual impulses, desire material results, but are suspicious of material machinery.

To-day, grant me time for a word about irrationalism, and more than a word about the materialistic view of power. As for the exclusive spirituality of those who think that spiritual power has nothing to do with outward activity and visible results, that tendency of thought, important as it is in the history of the Church, is of very slight practical importance for our English race. We are the sons of the robust

Irrational-  
ism.

sea-rovers of the North, and we have paused in piracy only in order to distribute the spoil. We do not stand in the slightest danger of being swallowed up in the interests of the unseen world. Therefore, though we may desire to speak of it in order to give symmetry to our views, we must not spend a moment in warning English Christians against that spiritual endeavour which would keep itself pure and strong by rejecting all visible results whatsoever. The exclusive spirituality, then, we leave in silence. The ever-present materiality we return to presently. The rejection or disparagement of reason shall be touched quite briefly.

First, give it its right name. It is irrationalism; and remember, that if rationalism is a dangerous  
*Its danger.* temper, irrationalism is much more dangerous. Compared to the poison of irrationalism, the contempt of reason, rationalism is sound bread. There is, perhaps, nothing more miserable than our modern contempt of reason. Perhaps you are not aware how widely-spread a disease of the mind it is. Because the work of speculation meets with great difficulties, and because it is very hard to give, in terms of logical precision, an account of being as we perceive it, because many of the tests of reality have broken down in our hands, we have fallen back on the position that there are no possible tests of reality; that we may think what we please; that we find a way to truth by sentiment; and that as long as

we push hard enough in some direction or another, it does not matter what we think about the end towards which all actual efforts and all possible efforts must be directed. This temper finds its exhibition sometimes in learned studies that seek for the foundations of conviction in what are really interesting features of its psychology, but not its foundations. It finds another exhibition among the less thoughtful and the less patient, in all that multitudinous pursuit of the life of fancy, the gazings, the peepings, the mutterings, which put forth fresh varieties every month—things that have something in them, but very little ; so little that it is wrong to spend upon it energies of curiosity which might ascertain the history of the Gospel, and powers of obstinacy which might vindicate the cause of the poor. The silly life, and the modern contempt of reason, are alike very bad things. It is certain that a religion which grows irrational always comes to ruin. First, because it alienates the best and hardest minds ; secondly, because it invariably produces by reaction a crude reliance upon mere argument, the very tyranny against which irrationalism is a faulty protest. And, thirdly, because it leaves unemployed, and therefore unredeemed, almost the highest faculty of our being. A religion that is not understood means an understanding that has no religion. A salvation that cannot, to some extent, be thought out—that is to say, to

the limits of our powers of thought—means a thought still left unsaved. A Christ Who is not the object of learning means a learning that has found no Christ.

But our national preference does not turn towards an exaltation of the hidden and inexpressible element in faith at the expense of its utterance or its visible results. Dangers besetting the practical life. Something different is the real characteristic of our England; another danger here besets the invitation to practical life. Here in England, practical is apt to mean ponderable. Here in England, to be energetic means to build and to plant. And I am the first to admit that building and planting may be an exhibition of real energy—yes, and of spiritual energy; but they are not the solitary or the most characteristic or the indispensable fruits of the Spirit. When a man ventures to say in England that our religion is not practical enough, he is held to mean that we have not enough orphanages; that we do not support the hospitals; that we do not provide bright services to catch people who care nothing for devotion—that, in fact, we fall far below the level of enterprise maintained in a thoroughly first-rate warehouse in the City to secure the distribution of its goods, whether people want them or not. There is a place for that kind of self-criticism in the Church. But we must not indulge in it without remembering that



these outward things are by no means the characteristic or the infallible proofs of a spiritual energy. They may be present when there is no spiritual energy at work, and they may be absent when spiritual energy has risen to its highest possible development.

Spiritual energies and spiritual gains must not be measured in terms of material advance. It is true that they produce material advance. But this is not their gain. Spiritual  
energies. Mr. Gladstone pointed out that Christianity cannot but make men rich, because it makes them regular in their habits ; honest, thrifty and sober, courageous and faithful. Thus it inevitably produces an accumulation of that very wealth which in its spiritual interest it must sweep away. Spiritual energy, then, produces, perhaps we may say as a by-product, material results. But it is not measured by those results. The work of the diamond-mines produces the only scenery in Kimberley. It builds mounds and hills of waste. But the prosperity of such an industry would not necessarily be measured by the height of those mounds. For the abundance of waste might only mean that the rock or earth treated was of low grade, so that a great deal of stuff must be broken up to get a few diamonds. Spiritual energies produce material results, but they are not to be measured in terms of material results. On the contrary, material results, if we are to arrive



at any measure of their genuine value, must be referred to a spiritual standard. We cannot form any conception of what they are worth unless we can name it in units of the spirit. This sounds an alarming statement. Is it true to say that the dredging of the bar at Durban, a matter of politics in the usually happy country of Natal, is a work to be measured by spiritual results? Yes, certainly. And a complete insight would judge whether it is better to repair old dredgers or to buy new ones, by knowing which course produced the best spiritual results.

Can we say that the industry in the compounds and mines and mills of Kimberley could be measured in spiritual units? Yes, certainly, if our knowledge were sufficient. But let me make haste to add that by a spiritual result I do not mean a mystic trance only, or a vision of what is usually unseen. I mean a human result, a psychical result, the result of love, hope, cheerfulness, kindness; the results seen in truth-telling, in knowledge, in courage and perseverance, in the sacrifice which mothers make for their children, in the care of those who have for those who have not. These are spiritual results. Spiritual results are not only found, though they are, indeed, most blessedly found, in wonderful advances in the immediate knowledge of God. They are found wherever in humanity there appears some fulfilment of our Saviour's desire,

Spiritual  
results.—A  
South  
African  
illustration.

that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. The results, therefore, of industry may be measured in spiritual units. We may count them in the rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed children of a hundred homes scattered up and down the line to Bulawayo.

A criticism, religious but superficial, might point with scorn to the result at Kimberley of a year's labour. Nothing but a handful of crystals—a miserable end towards which to have directed the toil of so many thousands of fellow-creatures. Whether that labour, under those conditions, is justified by results is a question I do not here touch. But there is an answer to the measurement of its value by the mere parcel of stones. Those bright crystals, it may be said, are so many keys to unlock the hoarded treasures of Europe, and to employ them in building the railway lines which open up the North. These lines have been fruitful, and will be more fruitful, in human results, vastly more real and permanent than the display of jewels in the cities of Europe. They have made of a land, once desolated by war and massacre, a great country where the old inhabitants are able to enjoy their own as they never did before, by reason of the presence of the white man, who is also making there a home for future generations of our race. It is untrue to say that once the African had his own there undisturbed, and that Europeans have robbed him of it. Only

one African had his own there. In what is now Southern Rhodesia, only the King was secure in his possessions. There was no private property in cattle: all belonged to the King. When the impis of Lobengula were sent across the veld, I have heard that the Mashonas used to drag their cattle to the top of flat rocks, and with them, their only wealth, lie in hiding until the soldiers of the great chief passed. This was how the African enjoyed his own before the white man arrived. Now there are landed proprietors, farmers, peasants, merchants, trading with, and profiting by, the white men who are responsible for peace and order. Peace, order, mutual respect, justice between man and man, it is by these that we justify the working of the "blue ground" of Kimberley. I admit that these human gains have been reached, not by the inevitable operation of economic forces, for the profits of Kimberley were private profits, but by the operation of wise thoughts in the mind of Cecil Rhodes. No doubt it is by the spiritual direction that good comes from the use of matter. It remains that we may actually measure the result of all that mining and crushing, that washing and sorting, not by numbering the stones and carats, but by marking along the line to the far north, across the Zambesi River, the families living in peace—railwaymen and their wives and babies growing up into a position where, if you will only follow them more

quickly with the Gospel and the Sacraments, they will have freedom for a large and strong Christian life, a preparation for the everlasting home. Instead of believing that religious impulses are to be justified because they make men work harder, we must believe that the hard bodily work is to be justified because it produces Christian hearts.

At Johannesburg there are large controllers of wealth and labour who are good friends to Missions among the natives of the Rand.

Sometimes, however, with the reticence which belongs to generous men, some of these supporters of Missions affect—shall I say? —a motive lower than the motive really animating them. I have heard it said that the Missions should point to their industrial result. It is found that in the long run the Christian teaching produces greater sobriety, stricter punctuality, and better order. Under its influence the labourers return earlier and in better condition from their weekly holiday. “Make them Christians,” it has been said, “and they will be early at work on Monday.” They will be more content and more thrifty, while there will be that increase of needs and that greater propensity to buy to which the ingenuous economist looks for the real advance of the African native. In England, it is true that the South African at home on tour is still sturdily quoted against the interest of Missions. The native, we are told in England, is a worse worker

The influence of missions.

when he is made a Christian. But this is not at least the universal cry in Africa. Instead, I have heard it said on the Rand that we can justify—and that to business men we must justify—our Christian teaching “in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence.” This is exactly what we must not and cannot do. That the industrial results follow I do not doubt, and it is a matter for thankfulness. But the Missions are not to be justified by their results in pounds. It is, on the contrary, precisely the millions which must be justified by their results in faith, hope, and charity. We are so far from being content to measure the value of the Gospel by the size of dividends, that we can only admit the dividends to be valuable if they produce larger floods of life more fully occupied by the love and hope, the joy and brotherly kindness, and purity of heart, which are the fruits of the work of our Divine Saviour.

First, then, we must say that the fruits of the Spirit alone finally measure the value of any work.

The fruits  
of the  
Spirit and  
faith.

In the second place, let us remember that the call of a Christian to a life of energy is not fully obeyed when that call is answered with works of social reform, though, indeed, those works are necessary, and unless they are present, the claim of faith, as St. James has taught us, is false. If when the poor man comes to our gate we say to him, with pious expressions of reliance upon the Divine bounty, “Be thou



clothed and fed," and "give them not the things which are needful to the body," our religion is vain. Spiritual energies must produce the fruit of true social zeal, for this is but another name for charity. It must seek to feed the hungry, not with uncertain doles, but by securing a juster reward to those upon whose labour is founded all the structure of our civilization. That is most true and most important.

But we have not fulfilled our call when we have tried to do this work. We have fulfilled our call only when we have found the sources of spiritual energy itself. If these are found, and the soul nourished by grace and exercised in charity, there will be produced, quite certainly, all such outward results as are solid and good. But if, neglecting the culture of love, and despising or forgetting prayer, and not longing for the power of the Holy Spirit, we trust to mere activity on the earthly plane, the very results which we have preferred to the kingdom of Heaven will crumble in our hands. The results of a selfish, earth-bound effort are temporary at the best, and will pass away with the things which gave them the semblance of being. Eternal results, and material results which contribute towards an eternal end, are the work of God's Holy Spirit alone. The practical religion, therefore, is not a religion which deserts for an earthly practice its heavenly effort. It is this desertion which marks the essential



error. We are so ready to think that the practical religion is a religion which, with a heart still unreconciled to God, and uncontrolled by the Spirit, flies to the creation of 'benevolent' works. Such works are admirable if they spring from a heart really and firmly united to God. They are worse than useless if the heart is empty and exiled, for they become the substitutes and the rivals of the really practical Christian life.

By another mistake comparable to this, the learned Christian life is sometimes supposed to be a Christian life that is learned,  
The scientific Christian life. no matter about what. The scientific

Christian life is supposed to be the life of a Christian who knows a great deal about the behaviour of matter at very low temperatures. But, in fact, the learned Christian life is a life which is learned about Christ, who as we know Him more, will be seen to hold in His heart the whole range of real interests. And the scientific Christian life is a life that has perceived and begun to obey some of the laws of spiritual movement. In correspondence with this, the practical Christian is not the Christian who is doing a great deal of something. He is the Christian who is doing the works of God, and who is growing in might in the inner man by following the laws of that growth and gain, so that he becomes strong in the Spirit, and consequently energetic and effective in the works of the Divine kingdom.

The practical Christian, then, is not a Christian who does something, or who does much. He is a Christian who gains and exercises the strength of Christ. And yet we often say of a man who speaks to us about prayer, who understands how we may really find our way through those tangles of sense which ought to be no tangles, and would be no tangles if once we learnt the secret of the Divine Presence—we say of one who is a guide to the true liberty of faith: “Yes; a beautiful preacher, very illuminated, very elevated, but very unpractical. Now, last week we had a man who told us exactly why we ought to vote for the Trades’ Disputes Bill. He was less spiritual, but much more practical.” No, no. It is the mystic who is practical. If you will listen to him, if you will learn the rule of his wonderful journey, if you will follow his advance, if by discipleship in the school where he was taught you will also experience that gain, that deliverance, that illumination, that freedom he experiences; then you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Then you may work for God, and in every plane of being. One spiritual man wholly immersed in God would infallibly revolutionize for good England and the world, though, indeed, it would be by his death. But a million men who desert their prayers in order to get more quickly to what they fondly call work are like a stoker on a liner

The  
practical  
Christian.

who should put out his furnace-fires and try to tow the ship himself. What a practical man! See how hard he is rowing. No; the practical stoker is the man who attends to the origin of the ship's energy, who stirs the fire and piles the fuel. If he will do this, attending to his work, there is no doubt the vessel will go forward. And so, if a Church, or rather, a Christian population in the great universal Church of heaven and earth, in the endeavour to be practical, deserts in any measure, and in favour of whatsoever service, the life of prayer, Scripture, Communion, penance, contemplation; when it no longer holds up its heart in the light and warmth of the Divine Presence, then it falls, while men praise it for activities, into the pit of spiritual sloth.

The practical Christian is the man who practically knows God. This is everlasting life. And

The search for life. we cannot work unless first we are alive.

The practical search is the search for life. If only Christians are alive in Christ, they will exhibit, in the harmony that belongs to life, all the fruits, from one end of the scale of being to the other; from the most unreal, most phenomenal, building of bridges and feeding of children, up to the most real, the most unseen, the most eternal—the liberation from the bondage to Satan of spirits which shall thereby rise up to the glorious liberty of the children of God. This is what we must mean by a practical, a forceful Christianity.

And this truth is of daily importance. It is all-important that to-day we should begin to accept it and to obey it. For, alas ! while we are pursuing shadows, and endeavouring, by means of energies that are not submitted to God, to create works which shall be useful to God, —and it is well if our aim is as good as this,—meanwhile the spiritual life, for the sake of which all the works are valuable, is perishing in neglect. Those who, without the sight, the knowledge, the love, the life, labour to form the things of this earth into more pleasing patterns, only turn over again and again the insufficient treasure of a bankrupt. They cannot make it greater by piling it in different forms. The poor boy in debt thinks he improves his position when he docketts his bills very carefully, and counts them up in a new way. So earthly energies continually rearrange the same impoverished estate, and can make the total no greater. But when one man turns his heart to God, when one man longs to go forth from those things, not so as to desert them, but so as to find God for them and bring God into them, then a channel is opened which God created for this very purpose—a channel by which God pours in from outside the passing scene, from riches beyond our ken, real accessions of substantial force and strength. How bewildered, how deceived, is the worldling, who thinks that prayer and thought and love are

unpractical ; counts them as the shadows which can move no burdens, while he is the practical man who knows where to buy cheapest and to sell dearest ! When all is said and done, every effort that he has made will be cancelled by some other effort, and the net result for the world will be at last nothing, but for this great and losing exception, that meanwhile souls that might have been enriched have grown poor. We know not when we are miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Even in earthly history, in the measurements of politics, we may learn that it is the spiritual man of some sort or another who always wins. Sometimes he is not a good-spiritualist. He is sometimes possessed only of a demonic earth-spirit. But it is always a person of mind, of vision, who prevails. All the great conquerors, all the great builders, all the great millionaires even—although it seems to me that they have diverted their forces into channels which are of very little importance—are men of the unseen life. It is always the ‘interior men’ that rule. But it is only the eternal, the Divine Spirit, that rules for more than a season. It is indeed an error to think that so long as we escape into the unseen all will be well ; for there is an evil as well as a good unseen. There is a demonic earth-spirit, the ruler of the powers of this world. But let us quite firmly

The hidden  
life the  
practical  
life.



grasp the truth, that it is the unseen, the hidden, life which is the practical life ; that the practical Christian books are the books that teach us how to pray ; that the practical Christian Church is the Church which is growing in the might of the Holy Spirit. Now, we need to be continually recalled to this. Those who have the best intentions, whose hearts are most set on God, who long to depend entirely upon His Grace, are very often nevertheless misled so as to desert Him, the Fountain of Living Waters, and dig for themselves cisterns, that can hold no water. It may be that those who have tried most bravely are most keenly aware of their failure in this respect ; and those who think their spiritual reliance is unwavering and their spiritual loyalty unstained may not be the men who have, in fact, been kept most free from the powers of this world that passeth away.

In Pascal's coat when he died was a document more significant than the *Provincial Letters*, more sacred than the *Pensées*. For that worn coat concealed in its lining a <sup>Pascal's</sup> "amulet." certain parchment with its paper copy which had been moved from coat to coat and bore in careful writing Pascal's Memorial of spiritual conviction. That "amulet," as it is called by Condorcet, has been read, perhaps, only by few out of the vast multitudes who have turned over the *Pensées* in one or other of their



many different arrangements. In that Memorial of Pascal you will find him saying, "I have fled from Thee ; I have deserted Thee ; I have crucified Thee ; I have left Thee. Oh that Thou mayest not leave me for ever !" And he writes as if it were significant of his life (so I read that wonderful page), "They have left Me, the Fountain of Living Waters." He whose whole life was in the unseen, whose intelligence, the brightest in France, perhaps in history, was entirely devoted, as we should judge, to the service of God, who had no entanglement of riches, ambition, or praise<sup>1</sup>—yet, when he judged himself, when he looked into his own heart, says, "I have turned away from the Fountain, the One Source." It is because he is loyal that he marks his disloyalty :—

"And they who fain would love Thee best  
Are conscious most of wrong within."

And that we may not be perpetually misled and waste precious years sure to become fruitful if they are spent in prayer, but doomed to sterility if they are saved for prayerless labour, in work that can never deserve the name of work, let us mark this great danger which perpetually besets us. It is a strange and wonderful fact, a fact but for experience incredible, that those who have tasted the unspeakable

<sup>1</sup> No entanglement, see Preface, p. xvi.

blessedness of the Divine Presence, whose eyes have been enlightened by the uncreated beauty, are, not with difficulty, but with ease, turned away from that essential bliss. But besides that dreadful infidelity, that mysterious perversion that chooses in preference to God something that is not God, <sup>The snare of the public demand.</sup> and whereby we fall back from the height of life into the abyss of our own nothingness, there is a snare which besets the men of good desires, even while they hold their purpose firm.

It is the snare of the public demand. It is the danger which comes from the kindly recognition accorded by other lovers of Christ. This man has a little visitation of grace ; there is in him a tiny channel open to the real truth ; and he utters his little truth. And because good men love the truth, and because here in our ancient Christian country there are armies of souls ready to welcome any clear word said sincerely for God, it follows that the welcomes, the opportunities of service, multiply ; and the man or woman,—for it is so with all of you in your measure,—begins to meet the kindly demand with something other than that gift which was originally valued. He is tempted to fall back upon something less than the Spirit, because in his narrow heart there is not a sufficient stream of that supply to meet the whole range of opportunity.

Does not something like this happen in commerce? A tradesman finds some useful product, and announces his discovery. He has enough to supply one hundred people a day. But presently he has each day five thousand orders, and he is under considerable temptation to 'fill the orders,' that customers may not be lost, with something different from the admirable substance he originally advertised. The largeness of the demand comes from the excellence of the real thing; but the largeness of the demand outstrips the real supply, and the deficit has to be made up with something else. Too many orders for English quartered oak—that is why there is so much oak from the Baltic. Now, the oak from the Baltic and from Austria is nearly as good as English oak. But the works of so-called charity which are not done in the power of the Spirit are not only a little inferior to the real thing; they are something of entirely different substance, and worthless for eternity.

Let us pray, therefore, both that God may give us abundant supplies of the Spirit; that we may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might; and also that, as the opportunity for service grows, we may be continually turned, not outwards so as to gather some kind of artificial supply, but inwardly to God. May we be more and more wholly turned towards God; every

Closing  
appeal.

day more diligently occupied in that work ; more faithfully labouring to dig the channels clear. For the heart of man is a fountain supplied from distant hills ; and it would flow for ever, and do all that is asked of it if we but kept the channel clear. Then would the Christian life answer to the Holy Spirit's word in the Song of Songs, and be a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Yes, the practical life is the life that keeps the inward channels open ; the life of power is the life in touch with God.

The cry which I have so imperfectly endeavoured to utter to you is not simply a cry inviting Christians to remember more constantly, as I pray that they may, the needs of the poor and the wounds of our society. It pleads that, remembering these sorrows, and longing to be of service to these sufferers, they should believe that they can do no hand's turn towards any real and lasting deliverance except in the exact proportion in which they bend their wills with an unmingled sincerity towards the great task of seeking and finding God, and yielding themselves to Him.

When I look at my own heart I perceive that there is in it the desire for God. But that desire is like a frail flame in a mass of unkindled coal, a faint glow in smouldering flax. It is like one hiding flower in a windy desert ; or rather,

because it is a movement more than a possession, that desire is like a slender stream or freshet in a pond which but for it lies still ; the heart a stagnant pool in which one feeble current may be discerned. Yet, let that current be preserved. May God allow its strength to grow. If we persevere in desire, there shall be increase of desire. If we think first five times one day of Him, this will be by His grace the way to think of Him one hundred times the following day. And if we think of Him one hundred times a day for a week, that will soon lead us to think of Him all day long. The current shall grow in strength till the sullen marsh, that began to be overgrown with unwholesome weeds, will undergo that beautiful change sometimes seen in a once-neglected river. It was half choked and sluggishly moving over worthless fish ; but it becomes again the bright stream that has been for generations an image and a restorer of health. The heart also with its faint current of movement towards God, if you preserve that movement, will become a fresh, clear water, running free in a massive stream of joy and worship. When this is secured, or while this happy change proceeds, there is no work in which He may not employ you ; and everything we rightly long for, in our age and country, will come to pass, not so soon as we all learn to strive and cry, but on the day when we learn to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.



For then we shall receive with all good things, the restoration of His commands, the revelation of His task ; the power once more to labour in the good works which He has prepared for us to walk in.

THE END







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